

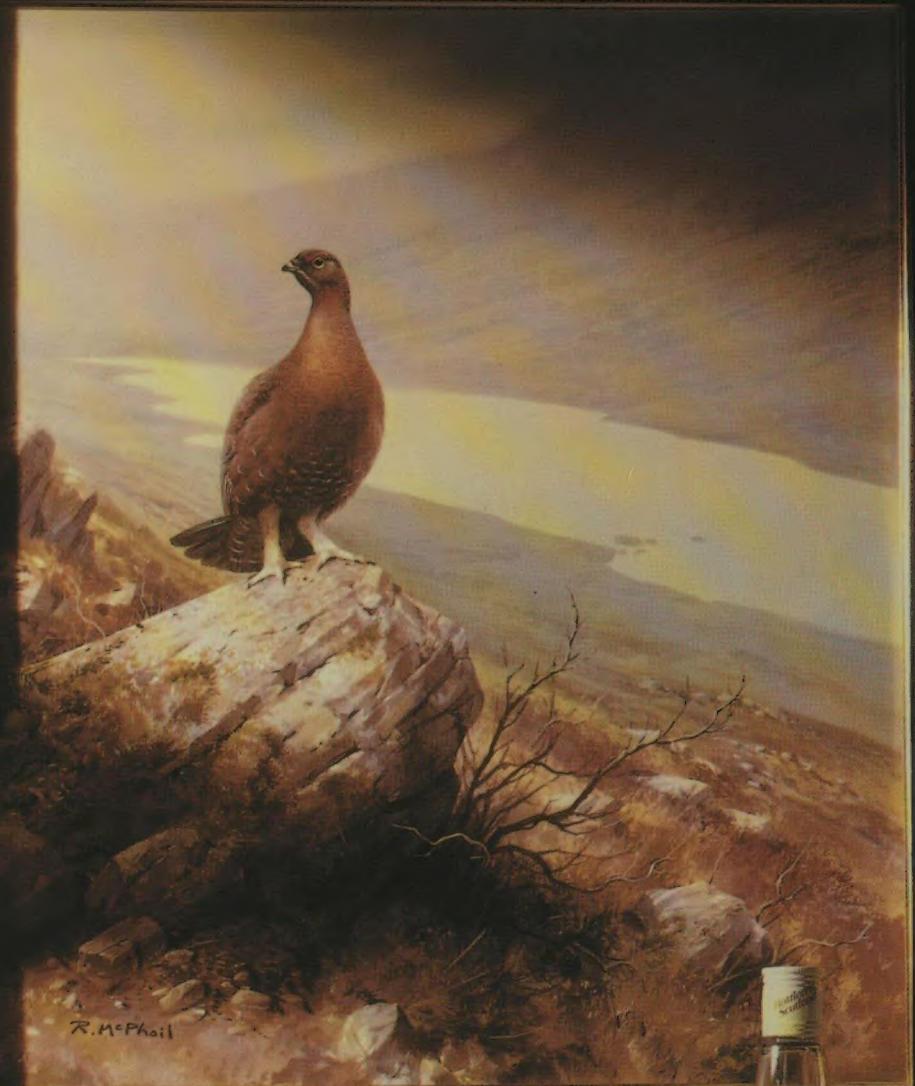
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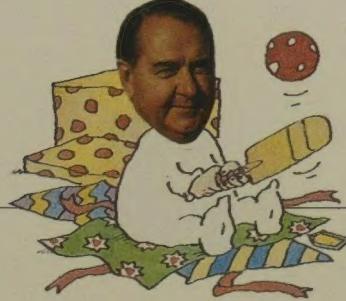
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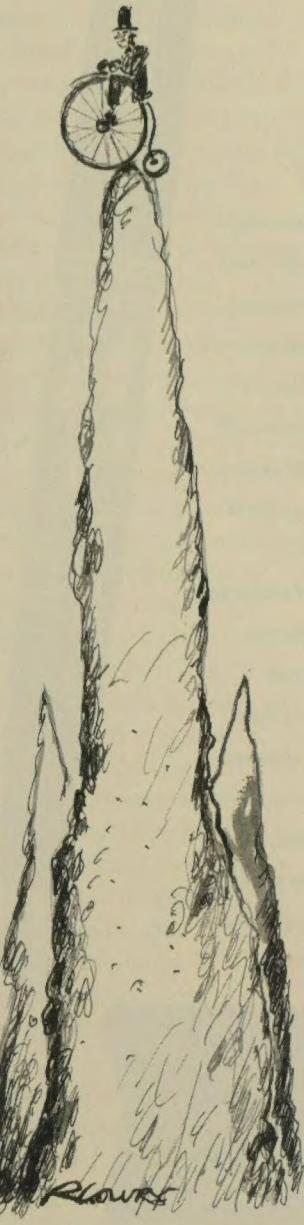
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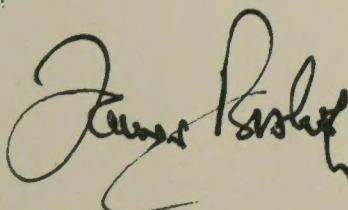
EDITOR'S LETTER

If Christmas is a time for reflection as well as rejoicing we shall have plenty to think about this year. Both at home and abroad the outlook has grown grimmer. The expected recovery in the world economy has failed to materialise and in almost every major country political leaders seem to have been in difficulties. The United States has been preoccupied by an election in which the incumbent President was consistently written off as a lame duck. In Russia Boris Yeltsin's promises of reform have run into trouble and he no longer seems to be in control of events. In Germany the price of reunification is beginning to prove higher than Helmut Kohl anticipated. In France the Maastricht referendum rebounded on François Mitterrand because it revealed that his country was divided almost exactly in half on this fundamental issue. In Canada Brian Mulroney was defeated in a referendum on his proposed constitutional reform. In Italy and Japan allegations of corruption have put the governments in disarray.

And in Britain? In Britain John Major's Conservative Government, after a triumph at the polls in April, has recently seemed unable to put a foot right. Its economic policy, pinned to the exchange-rate mechanism and to repeated promises that the pound would not be devalued, was forced off course. Then the Government, having backed (without full Cabinet approval) British Coal's decision to close 31 pits and add 30,000 miners to the growing number of the unemployed, was impelled by public outrage and the prospect of parliamentary defeat to retreat and provide time for a review of energy policy. It also seemed intent on defying public unconcern, and an influential group of its own back-benchers, by dragging the Maastricht treaty back into the limelight when clearly the popular demand was that more attention should be paid to getting the economy on the move. If all this seems unbearably disagreeable at a time when we expect to look forward to tidings of comfort and joy, perhaps we should be heartened by the fact that what we have been witnessing is democracy at work. Political observers, and MPs not in government, have at times written powerfully about what they call Britain's "elective dictatorship", by which they mean that a government elected with a working majority can do virtually what it likes for the next five years. Recent months have shown that this is not so. A government, newly elected with a clear working majority, has had to respond to public opinion in a most dramatic and satisfying way. From this, perhaps, will begin to be built the confidence that many people believe is the ultimate key to recovery.

Most of us, including our leaders, will be pleased to put these problems on one side for at least part of the Christmas holiday, and we hope this issue will help in that ambition. This is the 150th Christmas celebrated by *The Illustrated London News*, and the fundamental message has not changed. In this issue it is demonstrated most poignantly in the portrayals of the Madonna and Child chosen by many historians, art-lovers and experts for the feature on pages 18-25. Other articles reflect contrasting Christmas interests, and there are short stories by two of our best contemporary authors to provide, along with the traditional Christmas Quiz, mental stimulus for the quieter periods of the holiday.

We hope you will enjoy this special number, and we wish all our readers a happy, and confident, Christmas.



NELSON'S COLUMN

ATHENAEUM BALLOT



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Ballot days at the Athenaeum Club in London 100 years ago were memorable occasions. The number of candidates on the waiting-list exceeded 1,600, and it took 16 years or more for a candidate's name to come up for election—or rejection. Members were discriminating in their choice of new colleagues: of the votes cast, one black ball in 10 automatically eliminated a candidate, and one eager aspirant amassed 93 black balls.

Such was the eminence of the club in 1892 that *The Illustrated London News* sent its most distinguished artist, Sir John Gilbert (himself a member of the club), to draw the scene on a ballot day, when the first-floor drawing-room was crowded with members awaiting the result. His drawing, reproduced above left, identified 59 members, including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of Chichester, Gloucester, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford and Winchester, Lord Esher, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Professor Thomas Huxley, Sir Charles Hallé, Sir Joseph Lister, Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr Lawrence Alma-Tadema.

The original of Gilbert's drawing was presented to the Athenaeum, and earlier this year the club held a dinner to celebrate the centenary of the occasion. The present chairman, Sir Alcon Copisarow, recalled that at the time of the ballot in 1892 Gladstone had just come to office for the fourth and last time, with the support of John Morley (another of the club's members). In the two-thirds of a century since the club's foundation national income had virtually trebled while inflation was insignificant. He noted that the membership pattern of the club today was still recognisably that of 100 years ago—the law, the church and medicine remaining the most numerous vocations represented. Today there are fewer MPs, fewer in literature and the arts, but "a stronger admixture of industry, commerce, the media and the newer professions". It also has 48 Nobel prize-winning members.

The photograph, left, shows some of today's members standing on what the *ILN* of 100 years ago described as "the grand flying staircase" before they moved into the dining-room for dinner. The chairman had invited members to look ahead at the next 100 years, confident that no one would be there to see whose forecast was right. Catching the eye of some of his distinguished scientific members, he quickly added the qualification: "But even then, we cannot quite be sure of that."

Members awaiting the ballot result at the Athenaeum Club, above, drawn in 1892 by Sir John Gilbert for the *ILN*. Right, members on the staircase before the centenary dinner in 1992.



TERRY FINCHER

SANTA NICHOLAS



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St Nicholas's Day, December 6, marks the beginning of the Christmas season in many countries, and the date helps to explain the transmogrification of the Christian saint, bishop of Myra, into the popular figure of Santa Claus. It is the day on which Nicholas, who lived in the fourth century AD, is believed to have died. He came to Myra as a young man after travelling in Egypt and Palestine. Legend has it that his election as bishop was divinely inspired. The church dignitaries, having failed to agree on a candidate for the vacant bishopric, had decided to elect the first man who entered the building on the following morning. Some suggest that Nicholas was forewarned, others say that if so then it was God who gave him the tip-off.

Even in his lifetime Nicholas had a reputation for performing miracles and good deeds, not least in saving shipwrecked sailors and in bringing the dead back to life. His association with the later Santa Claus seems to derive mainly from the story of a man unable to afford the dowries necessary to find suitable husbands for his three daughters. Nicholas went secretly and by night to their house and threw in three purses of gold. One landed in a stocking hung up by the chimney to dry.

The other well-known tale of Nicholas's patronage of children (used by Benjamin Britten in his *St Nicholas* cantata) is that of the three pickled boys. Lost during a time of famine they knocked on the door of a house owned by a butcher, who took them in, murdered them in their sleep, cut up their bodies and salted the flesh in a tub. Nicholas, informed of the crime by an angel, went to the house and brought them back to life.

When Nicholas died he was buried in the church at Myra, but his bones have not remained there. In 1087, following the schism between the Roman and Greek Orthodox churches, a party of adventurers from Italy seized the remains and carried them to Bari, where they remain today (though rival claims to their possession have at various times been put forward by the Venetians and the Russians). The ruined tomb still attracts many visitors, particularly on December 6.

The ancient church of St Nicholas in Myra, on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, where the remains of the saint were held until 1087, when they were seized and carried away to Bari, in Italy.

THE ROYAL BALLET



Fiona Chadwick as *Cinderella* Photo: Ian Corless

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WELCOME BACK WIGMORE HALL

In addition to its musical bill of fare, the refurbished Wigmore Hall offers fine food to sustain concertgoers and to refresh West End shoppers.

The lights are on again at the Wigmore Hall. London's historic recital room reopens on November 12 after 16 months of refurbishment, which has improved front-of-house and backstage facilities without altering the familiar aspects of the Grade II listed building. Concertgoers who in the past had to battle their way across the ludicrously undersized bar, only to hear the bell signal the end of the interval just as they had been served, will discover a range of new restaurant facilities in the basement (which was reinforced for use as government offices during the Second World War).

As well as a bar, a café/restaurant will serve pre-concert meals and light suppers afterwards, and will also be available throughout the day to workers and shoppers in the area. Hence the new flight of steps leading from Wigmore Street that gives access to the basement outside performance hours. A particular attraction will be the traditional Sunday lunch served between the popular 11.30 am coffee concert and the 4 pm matinée.

The restaurant, which is operated by Liz Philip, founder of the Archduke

wine bar behind the Festival Hall and the Footstool restaurant in the crypt of St John's Smith Square, has been designed in the Arts and Crafts style. The carpet, woven after a William Morris design, the William De Morgan tiles, oak panelling and wood-block floor will harmonise with the Art Nouveau style of the hall itself. No alterations have been made to the tiled entrance passage and foyer; the auditorium has merely been refurbished, and the mural depicting the Soul of Music and the Genius of Harmony, which adorns the cupola over the platform, has been restored.

Built at the beginning of the 20th century by the piano manufacturers Bechstein, whose showroom it then adjoined, the hall originally bore their name but was rechristened after the street in 1917, when Bechstein sold up to Debenhams. The pianist and composer Ferruccio Busoni and the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe were among the artists who took part in the inaugural concerts held in 1901, on May 31 and June 1, to celebrate the opening.

During the next 90 years the world's greatest musicians performed there:

Caruso in 1906, Rubinstein in 1912, Solomon in 1917, Cortot in 1921. Later on, Schwarzkopf, Christoff, de Los Angeles, Bream, Lipatti and Barenboim all gave débüt recitals at the Wigmore. The "first-rate acoustic qualities" commended in 1901 by a critic in *The Sketch* still draw the most eminent singers and instrumentalists, many of whom will be taking part in the gala reopening festival that begins on November 12 and continues until the end of this year.

Among them are the soprano Margaret Price, who is one of the soloists in the Celebration of Shakespeare, comprising many kinds of song set to texts by the poet; she also gives a solo recital of German and English songs. The eagerly-awaited young Italian mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli will be heard in a Rossini programme. As part of the Festival of Scandinavian Arts, centred at the Barbican, the Wigmore will also host a series of recitals by some leading Nordic singers, each one introduced by the great Swedish soprano Elisabeth Söderström.

MARGARET DAVIES

□ Details of new season in Listings p93.

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NEW LIFE FOR OLD GLASS

Stained glass windows are one of the greater glories of our churches, including those made redundant and either demolished, left to rot or transformed to other uses. The fate of the glass in these churches, which have numbered more than 1,000 in the last two decades, has been a cause of such concern that the London Stained Glass Repository was set up both to rescue good-quality stained glass and to find suitable new homes for it. The repository, a registered charity housed in the basement of Glaziers Hall in that warren of streets clustered around Southwark Cathedral, is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary.

The success of this admirable initiative can be judged from some of its achievements. In 1983, for example, some stained glass from the redundant church of St Mark in Southampton was sent to the Falkland Islands, where it has been used to replace windows in the church of St Mary in Stanley. The church was damaged in the war with Argentina, and its incumbent, Monsignor Sproggan, visited the London repository where he chose two windows from Southampton—one of the archangel Gabriel and one of the Virgin Mary. Both were in Pre-Raphaelite style, the work of Henry Holiday, and are late Victorian.

Two more of the Henry Holiday windows were found a new home in the Chapel of the Holy Innocents in Pinjarra, near Perth, in Australia, and other glass from Southampton was placed in churches in Cleethorpes, Aldershot and Lincoln, in a new church near Grimsby, and in the William Morris Gallery in London.

To commemorate the loss of two students in the Lockerbie air disaster of 1988 the American School in Regent's Park, London, placed glass windows depicting Joan of Arc and the Venerable Bede in the school's library. The glass, by Luke Dampney and dating from the 1920s, had been acquired from All Saints' Church, Plymouth.

In addition to the work of Henry Holiday and Luke Dampney the repository has also had glass by such artists as Hugh Arnold, C. E. Kempe, A. W. N. Pugin, William Wailes, Ford Maddox Brown and Edward Burne-Jones. On one occasion in 1990 glass by these last two artists, from the studios of Morris & Co, was rescued only just in time. The church of Habergham Eaves, in Burnley, had been declared superfluous to pastoral needs, but no decision had been made about subsequent use or demolition. Among its valuable stained glass windows were "Enoch" by Burne-Jones and

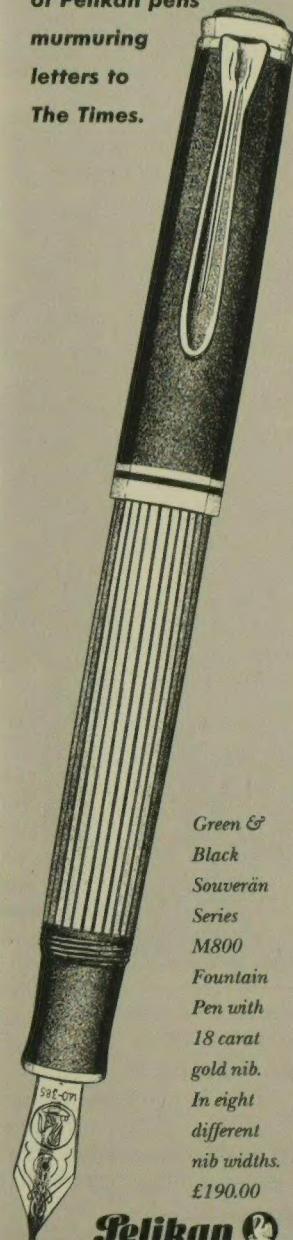


"Dorcas" by Ford Maddox Brown. Vandals had already been at work smashing windows, but because glass was part of the fabric of the church it could not be removed without a "faculty" and listed building consent. Turning a blind eye to the law, the Diocese consented to its removal, which was carried out before the church was badly damaged by fire and the remaining glass lost.

The repository is concerned that many churches lose their stained glass during the redundancy process, which inevitably, and rightly, takes time. But during the process efforts to save important stained glass can be frustrated. One church in north London, whose glass had survived to the granting of a faculty, had 22 windows smashed by vandals the very next day. No glass was left for the repository to collect.

The London Stained Glass Repository's address is Glaziers Hall, 9 Montague Close, London Bridge, SE1.

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The Travellers' and
The Reform, in
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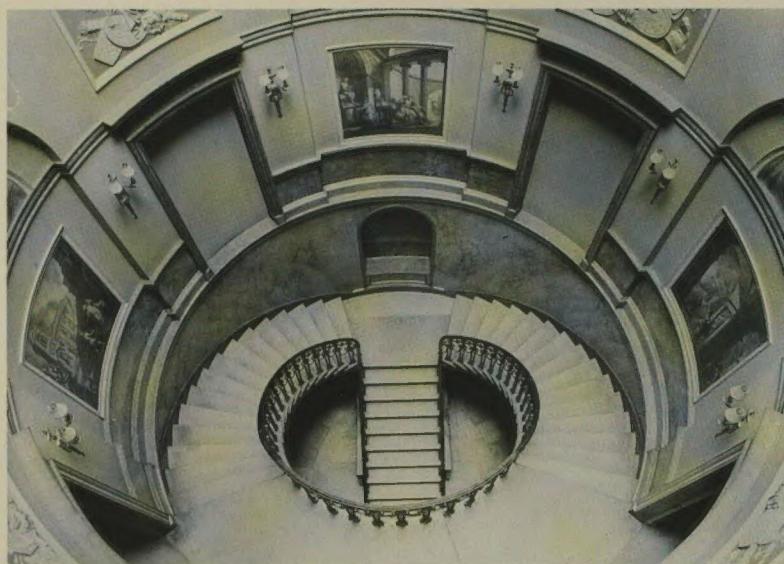
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NELSON'S COLUMN DESIRABLE RESIDENCE TO LET



The Music Room, above, at Home House, was used by Mrs Courtauld as a drawing-room.

The building's spacious interiors allowed Robert Adam to create this staircase, right.



COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ARTS

One of Robert Adam's finest London houses, Home House, at 20 Portman Square, badly needs a tenant. Until three years ago it was occupied by the Courtauld Institute, but since the Institute moved out Home House has stood rather forlornly between two other vacant buildings, occupied only by security guards costing its owner, Portman Estates, £90,000 a year.

The house, built between 1775 and 1777, was commissioned by the Countess of Home, a rich and well-connected but eccentric lady of colonial Jamaican extraction who seems to have been unknown in London until her appearance in Portman Square. Already in her late 60s, and having buried two husbands (the first wealthy, the second noble), she apparently had no children. Her only kin

were a small boy named William Gale, who later inherited the house, and the Duchess of Cumberland, to whom she was distantly related through her first marriage to a Jamaican landowner, James Lawes.

No expense was spared in the construction of her new residence. The site was large, with a frontage of five windows instead of the usual three, and the spacious interior allowed Adam to create his most magnificent staircase, circular and free-standing, and reception rooms which included a first-floor drawing-room suite planned around two Gainsborough portraits of the Cumberlands (now in Buckingham Palace). The library paid homage to contemporary writers, scientists, intellectuals and artists (including, since he was always one for

self-advertisement, Adam himself). An Etruscan room is devoted to Homer.

Lady Home died in 1782 and there followed a succession of distinguished and often colourful residents in Home House, several of whom made alterations to it. They included Earl Grey, the Goldschmid family, the French Ambassador, and finally Samuel Courtauld and his wife who, with their art collection, love of music and commitment to the ideas of Robert Adam, restored the house as nearly as possible to its original state using Adam's drawings (now in the Soane Museum).

Following the death of his wife in 1931 Samuel left the house and founded the Courtauld Institute of Art there in her memory. The Institute, part of the University of London, was the first in Britain to establish the study of art history as an academic discipline. Its director for more than 25 years after the war was Anthony Blunt, later revealed as a Russian spy, who had an apartment in the rabbit warren of old servants' quarters, which formed the upper part of the four-storey house.

Robert Adam died in 1792, and it is sad to see one of his great London houses empty in this bicentenary year. It will be hard to find suitable tenants. Portman Estates emphasises that Home House is a private property, but it is hard to envisage its return to private use in today's environment. The company will not put a value on the house, which is in any case not for sale. The most that the landlord is likely to offer is a lease of 50 years, and further limitations are imposed by Westminster Council's listed-buildings regulations. The National Trust was interested in the building, but withdrew from negotiations earlier this year—normally it acquires only freehold property. An embassy might find the building suitable, but embassies do not always respect historic buildings. A club might be a desirable tenant, but new ones would probably find the cost of upkeep daunting. An ideal solution might be something similar to Spencer House, in St James's Place, still owned by the Spencer family but currently used for special events and functions, with limited public access allowed to its historic rooms.

When the Courtauld Institute occupied the premises, for a period of 57 years, its secretary sat and worked in a second-floor marble bathroom, still complete with its gargantuan 19th-century fittings. The prospect must surely be irresistible to the secretary of some other venerable institution.

ANN KODICEK

NELSON'S COLUMN

WAR CORRESPONDENCE

The Imperial War Museum is requesting suitable material for a Forces Sweethearts exhibition opening on February 14. The focus is on love affairs, happy and sad, real and imagined, from the First World War to the Gulf conflict, taking as its themes true-life stories, wartime weddings and dream girls. The first section shows how relationships were held together by precious letters, the contents of which became increasingly sentimental and philosophical as time drew on and death seemed ever more imminent. From the battle-fronts came letters marked "to be opened in the event of my death" or addressed to an unborn child, apologising for the father's absence and urging him or her to "be good to Mummy". Vast quantities of love-letters arrived written on "blueys", or aerogrammes, whose 50th anniversary is to be celebrated in 1993 by the exhibition's sponsor, Royal Mail International.

Telegrams were literally a matter of life or death. The touchingly simple message, "Home tonight, love Jack", meant the whole world to its recipient, who had been waiting all through the war to read those words.

Individual stories are highlighted. In the First World War Will and Emily exchanged delightful correspondence, until Will was killed at the front. Unaware of his death, his girlfriend carried on writing (though, for some unexplained reason, started using red ink). It was only when a letter was returned, impersonally stamped with "killed in action", that Emily learnt the truth. She died unmarried, aged 80, saying Will had been her only love.

John and Gwendolen's tale from the Second World War is happier. John, a Royal Marine, was stationed in Portland Harbour preparing for the D-Day landings. The men were restless and were sent out on an initiative test, which involved completing such odd tasks as counting bricks in a church wall. The final question, "Where is the village bull of Bincombe kept?", led John to the dairy where Gwendolen was milking a cow. He asked her out and they fell in love, marrying when he returned safely from the Normandy beaches. The original initiative-test sheet will be on view, while John and Gwendolen are soon to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

A marvellous collection of wartime bridal dresses includes one made from parachute silk, a frock lent by Eleanor Roosevelt in May, 1944, and a green velvet dress worn by a bride when her RAF pilot husband was suddenly called out to the Gulf, leaving her no



time to buy a proper wedding gown. A photograph shows another bride in one of the dresses loaned by Barbara Cartland during the Second World War, for the cost of the dry-cleaning. Some people went to great lengths to ensure they had the right attire for their big day. One couple had brocade sent over from Australia in a food tin to evade customs. Original hotel bills testifying to honeymoons—often only a day or two long if they happened at all—will be seen alongside corsages, wedding presents and cards, and stories of GI brides who were whisked off to America.

Fantasy, in the form of pin-up girls and national forces' sweethearts like Vera Lynn, played an important role, especially in the two world wars.

To accompany the exhibition a book, *Forces Sweethearts*, written by Joanna Lumley, with a foreword by Jilly Cooper (both from Army families), will be published by Bloomsbury in late January. In the mean time the organisers would be delighted to receive wartime memorabilia, particularly from the Falklands War. Contributions (which can be anonymous) should be offered to Penny Ritchie-Calder on 071-416 5323.

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WINDOW ON THE WORLD

JUMBO JET DISASTER IN AMSTERDAM

Two blocks of flats were destroyed and more than 50 people killed when a Boeing 747 flown by the Israeli airline El Al crashed on October 4.



FLOODING IN FRANCE

Severe storms caused much damage in parts of France at the end of September. More than 50 people were killed, many drowned in floods that swept through the south-eastern part of the country. Worst-hit was the department of Vaucluse, in Provence. These photographs, taken in Vaison-la-Romaine, show the depth and intensity of the waters

that cascaded through the streets from the river Ouvèze, a tributary of the Rhône. At least 25 people were killed in this medieval town, some of them tourists staying in local campsites. Caravans as well as cars were carried away, some with people inside them. Winds up to 75 miles an hour were recorded, and the region had more than twice its average monthly rainfall in less than five hours. More than 150 homes in Vaucluse were totally destroyed or badly damaged and 12 bridges were swept away.





MINERS ON THE MARCH

The British Government gave way to a surge of national protest after British Coal announced on October 13 that 31 pits would be closed with the loss of 30,000 jobs. The decision had not been discussed by the full Cabinet before it was announced, and though the Government initially supported the move, declaring that British Coal could

not go on producing coal which could not be sold, it subsequently authorised the trade and industry secretary, Michael Heseltine, to agree a temporary stay of execution to 21 of the 31 pits and to promise a review of the country's energy policy. Miners and their supporters marched through London as the Commons met to vote on October 21, when a Labour motion opposing the revised plan was defeated by 13 votes. Four days later a mass rally was held in London in support of the miners.



Miners and their supporters gather in Hyde Park before marching on the House of Commons, top. Above left, Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, enjoys unusual popularity as he leads the march of protesters through the streets to Westminster, alongside Labour MPs Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner. The miners, who received enthusiastic greetings from Londoners lining their route, carried banners and slogans calling for the sacking of ministers rather than miners.

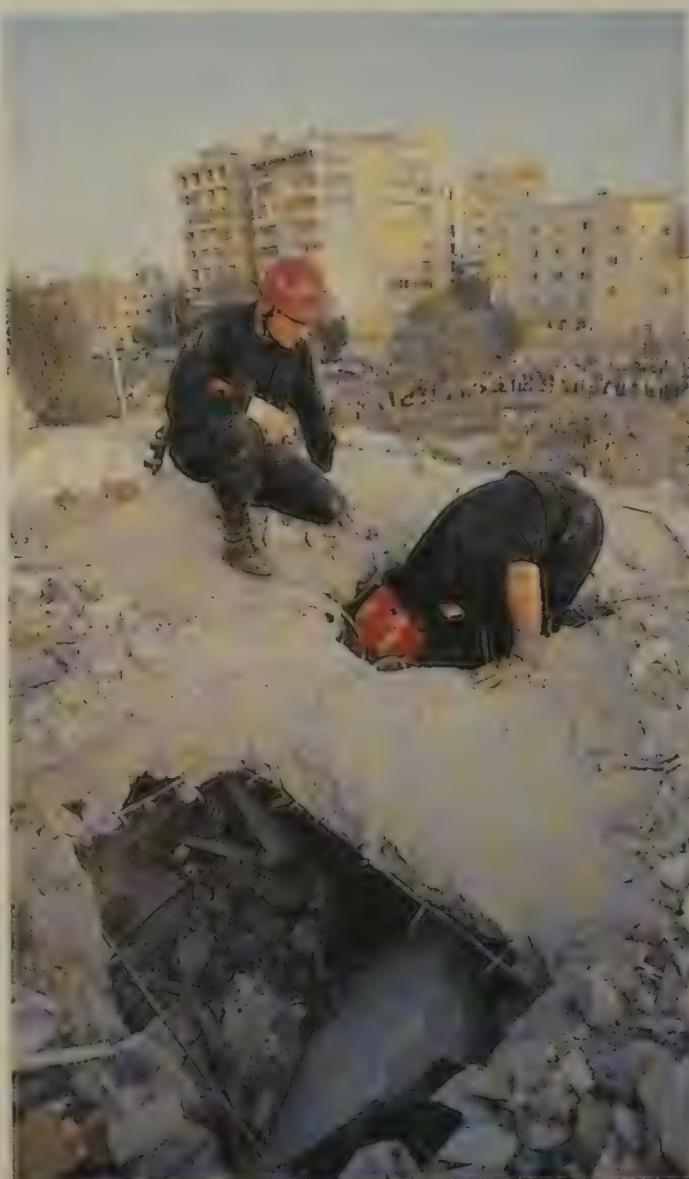
SYGMA



REX FEATURES



SYGMA



CAIRO'S EARTHQUAKE

More than 500 people died and some 6,000 were injured in the earthquake which hit Cairo on October 12. The tremor, lasting for some 20 seconds and measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, brought some old buildings, including one 14-storey structure, to the ground. Among those killed were schoolchildren in the suburb of Maadi. Losses were estimated at more than £174 million. Some days after the earthquake riots broke out in protest at the slow official reaction to the disaster.

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The Madonna and Child has featured in Christian art from the earliest times. We asked a number of prominent people in the art world to nominate their favourite, and between them they chose 37 different works. Edward Lucie-Smith reports on the surprising result.

POPULAR MADONNAS

The mother-and-child theme in art is older than Christianity itself. It seems to occur first among the ancient Egyptians, with representations of the goddess Isis holding the divine child Horus in her lap. These images, which proliferated during the so-called Late Period (332–30 BC), are recognisable precursors of all the sculptured and painted Madonnas that feature in Christian art.

Within Christian iconography the Madonna and Child appears early, at a time when Christians were still being persecuted. There is an example in the Roman catacombs (the Cemetery of Priscilla) which dates from the mid third century AD. Clearly one reason for the prompt appearance of the image in the Christian era was the fact that it was already securely established in pagan art. Isis remained a popular goddess in Roman times. Another reason was that the representation was inherently ambiguous. If it was without trappings it might portray any mother and her child.

Today the Madonna and Child is still the most widely accepted of all Christian emblems. Because of what it has to say about a simple human relationship it appeals even to people who have no particularly strong religious faith. This emerged clearly from the reactions of the widely varied list of respondents whom we asked to choose their favourite Madonna, and give reasons for the choice. Some of those who replied disclaimed religious feelings altogether. Sir David Wilson, former director of the British Museum, declared bluntly that “as a northerner with a Protestant



An Egyptian figurine of the goddess Isis suckling Horus. From the sixth century BC the popularity of Isis spread through Egypt and subsequently into the Roman world, and was worshipped until the sixth century AD. By then the mother-and-child image had become an accepted part of European religious art.

background” he rather disliked religious painting. His choice was a Romanesque whalebone carving in the Victoria and Albert Museum, picked largely as a representative of its period, in which he is an expert. This little relief, dating from the late 11th century, was the earliest Madonna cited.

The majority came from the Italian Renaissance—revealing something about the current cultural climate, which prefers the intimate and human to the transcendental. The list starts with the Sienese painter Duccio (Sir Denys Lasdun), still strongly influenced by Byzantium, and continues through artists such as Gentile da Fabriano (Elizabeth Longford), Masaccio (Mary Fedden), Cosmè Tura (Sir Michael Levey) and Carlo Crivelli (Brinsley Burbridge). Perhaps surprisingly, Raphael—once considered *par excellence* the painter of Madonnas—picked up only two nominations: the *Madonna and Child with the Infant St John*, in Vienna, chosen by Lord Archer (“Just look and you’ll see why”) and the newly discovered *Madonna of the Pinks*, currently on loan to the National Gallery from the Duke of Northumberland. The latter picture was the choice of Caroline Elam, editor of *The Burlington Magazine*, who called the artist “the master of this subject” and admired the perfect condition of the painting itself.

Surprisingly no one chose that other great master of Madonna compositions, Botticelli, though Lord Jenkins of Putney (former Labour Minister for the Arts Hugh Jenkins) chose a Botticelliesque

Henry Moore

The Northampton Madonna

(St Matthew's Church, Northampton)

Chosen by Lady Birk, Dennis Farr, Sir Nicholas Goodison, Lord Palumbo and Paul Whitfield





Dorothea Lange: *Migrant Mother*,
Nipomo, California, 1936
(Library of Congress, Washington DC)
Marina Vaizey



Andrea del Verrocchio
Ruskin Madonna
(National Gallery of Scotland)
Lord Perth



Ascribed to Filippo Lippi
The Virgin and Child
(National Gallery, London)
Lord Jenkins of Putney



The Master of Moulins
Nativity and Cardinal Rolin
(Musée Rolin, Autun)
John Ward



Piero della Francesca
Virgin and Saints
(Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)
Judge Stephen Tumim

but anonymous work in the National Gallery. His reasons were rather negative: "I don't care for the few Madonna and Child paintings that I know, but this one is neither over-familiar nor soppy."

The Florentine school lost out to the Venetians, and also to Mantegna. Four votes (Mary Burkett, A. S. Byatt, Norman Rosenthal and Sir Christopher Tugendhat) went to his *Madonna with Sleeping Child* from Berlin, recently shown in the Royal Academy's great Mantegna exhibition. What appealed was its combination of simplicity and great tenderness. The collector Doris Saatchi chose the same artist's rather

similar *Virgin and Sleeping Child* in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan. The picture is a triumph of superb design over deplorable condition. The selected Venetian paintings—by Giovanni Bellini (one from the Brera, one from the National Gallery, chosen by Andrew Faulds and Christopher White, respectively) and Cima da Conegliano (the choice of that great expert on Venice, John Julius Norwich)—emphasise the samé values of simplicity, humanity and tenderness. Apart from the Gentile da Fabriano, the Tura and Piero della Francesca's grandiose Montefeltro altarpiece (chosen by Judge Stephen

Tumim), there were few calls for the Madonna seated in state.

Our respondents applied the same value system to French and Flemish painting of the 15th century. Choices cover a spread of great names: Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, Robert Campin, Hans Memling and the Master of Moulins. Bernard Levin was the only one to pick something German—a Madonna by Dürer.

There was no enthusiasm at all for Baroque art. Neil MacGregor, current director of the National Gallery, picked Correggio's proto-Baroque *The Madonna of the Basket*; Luke Rittner, former

Andrea Mantegna
Madonna with Sleeping Child
(Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin)
Chosen by Mary Burkett, A.S. Byatt, Norman Rosenthal, Sir Christopher Tugendhat





Donatello
Chellini Madonna
(Victoria and Albert Museum)
Donald Sinden



Anonymous
The Adoration of the Magi
(Victoria and Albert Museum)
Sir David Wilson



Anonymous
The Flawford Alabaster
(Nottingham Castle Museum)
Francis Cheetham



Luca della Robbia
Madonna of the Rose Garden
(Museo Nazionale, Florence)
Enoch Powell



Jacopo della Quercia
Madonna and Child
(Church of San Petronio, Bologna)
Lord Eccles

secretary-general of the Arts Council, chose a van Dyck in a private collection; and Dame Judi Dench chose Georges de La Tour's rigorously simple and quietist *Le Nouveau-Né*, Baroque in date but not in feeling. Rubens, Guercino and Guido Reni were all conspicuous by their absence. So, too, was Murillo.

Sculpture followed a much less predictable course. The great names of the Renaissance figured here and there: Donatello's bronze roundel in the V&A (Donald Sinden), a terracotta by Luca della Robbia (Enoch Powell), a work by Jacopo della Quercia (Lord Eccles). There were two votes (Lord Jenkins of

Hillhead and the artist John Mills) for Michelangelo's *Bruges Madonna*—that most mysterious of sculptures, because so far detached from the rest of the master's œuvre—but none for the accessible and beautiful Michelangelo relief belonging to the Royal Academy. Once again Baroque art was conspicuous by its absence—nothing from 17th-century Italy, France or, more surprisingly, Spain. The aristocratic Virgins carved in lime-wood by the Rococo sculptors of 18th-century Austria and Bavaria were also missing. They show a mixture of swooning emotion and hauteur that may be too rich a brew for English art-lovers.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was that the outright winner in the Madonna stakes (if one can put it so irreverently) was the only 20th-century work of art nominated. No fewer than five respondents (Lady Birk, Dennis Farr, Sir Nicholas Goodison, Lord Palumbo and Paul Whitfield, plus an alternative vote from Sir Hugh Casson) opted for Henry Moore's *Northampton Madonna*. The conclusion must be that what speaks to us most clearly, even when the artist is dealing with an age-old theme, is the art of our own time. That is, on those occasions when the artist succeeds in finding an accessible idiom.

Michelangelo
The Bruges Madonna
(Church of Our Lady, Bruges)
Chosen by Lord Jenkins of Hillhead and John Mills



The majority of the panel's nominations were from the Italian Renaissance,

revealing a preference for the intimate and human over the transcendental.



Georges de La Tour
La Noueuse-Né
(Musée de Rennes)
Dame Judi Dench



Andrea Mantegna
Virgin and Sleeping Child
(Museo Poldi-Pezzoli, Milan)
Doris Lockhart Saatchi



Jacopo Bellini
Madonna and Child
(Los Angeles County Museum of Art)
Nicholas Bonham



Petrus Christus
Madonna of the Dry Tree
(Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano) Pamela Armstrong



Anonymous
The Virgin Perivleptos
(Ohrid, Yugoslavia)
Sir Hugh Casson



Duccio
Matera
(Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana, Siena)
Sir Denis Lasdun



Duccio
Rucellai Madonna
(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)
Lord Renfrew of Kaimthorn



Gentile da Fabriano
Madonna and Child
(Royal Collection)
Elizabeth Longford



Giovanni Bellini
The Greek Madonna
(Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan)
Andrew Faustus



Carlo Crivelli
Madonna and Child
(National Gallery of Art, Washington DC)
Brinsley Burbridge



Robert Campin
Madonna and Child in an Interior
(National Gallery, London)
Mireille Galinou



Albrecht Dürer
Virgin and Child
(Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
Bernard Levin



Anonymous
Madonna and Child
(Private collection)
Patrick Cormack



Cosmè Tura
The Virgin and Child Enthroned
(National Gallery, London)
Sir Michael Levey



Giovanni Bellini
The Madonna of the Meadow
(National Gallery, London)
Christopher White



Francesco Parmigianino
The Madonna with the Long Neck
(Uffizi Gallery, Florence)
Joan Bakewell



Masaccio
The Virgin and Child
(National Gallery, London)
Mary Faldaen



Jan van Eyck
Virgin and Child with Saints and a Donor
(Frick Collection, New York)
Professor John Last



Hans Memling
Diptych of Martin van Nieuwenhove
(Memling Museum, Bruges)
John Tusa



Raphael
Madonna of the Pinks
(Currently at National Gallery, London) Caroline Elam



Antonio Correggio
The Madonna of the Basket
(National Gallery, London)
Neil MacGregor



Raphael: *Madonna and Child with the Infant St John*
(Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
Lord Archer



Sir Anthony van Dyck
Virgin and Child with St Anne
(Private collection)
Luke Rittner



Cima da Conegliano
The Virgin and Child
(National Gallery, London)
John Julius Norwich

SEASON OF GOODWILL

Short story by Penelope Lively

The Pococks, Norma and George, drove to Birmingham three days before Christmas to do some shopping. They travelled in silence, for the most part. George was not a man given to idle chatter, and Norma was busy constructing a programme for his memorial service. George was in excellent health, and Norma a fond wife, but she was a compulsive planner. Her life was devoted to the determined marshalling of events; she was possessed by a consuming desire to impose order, to arrange, to contain, to supply a structure where structure there is none. She made lists. She devised operational strategies. She would draw up an agenda for a telephone conversation. Her time was allocated weeks in advance. The notion of the memorial service programme had been put into her head by the sight of a funeral parlour. Where others might have felt a passing chill, an intimation of mortality, Norma saw only a new area for pre-emptive arrangement. She pondered the virtues of a string trio as opposed to a pianist or someone playing, say, the oboe—George enjoyed good music. And then she noticed that the traffic was thickening, they were

approaching the outskirts of the city, and she abandoned the whole exercise, which was after all a touch speculative, and turned her mind instead to her arrangements for the ensuing couple of hours. The shopping list, of course, was in her bag, and her itinerary in her head. Christmas was Norma's finest hour, the ultimate challenge. She had it licked, this year as ever. Freezer stocked, presents bought and wrapped. The current outing was a subsidiary action, a small mopping-up operation to take care of certain last-minute requirements. George, whose heart was not in it anyway, would pass the time at the library, changing books and records.

It had started to rain. Heavily. The shining black road reflected the tail-lights of cars ahead and the swags of Christmas lights adorning garages and pubs. They were navigating a big round-about. The roadside trees were trussed with more strings of lights; neon reindeer leaped in perpetual motion ahead of a grinning Father Christmas above a car showroom. Norma liked Christmas, mainly for the opportunities it offered for triumphant management. This year they had a big family gathering on The Day, visiting in-laws tomorrow, and a sequence of commitments in the three-day run-up ahead. Of course, there were

always lurking potential disruptions, those obstinate uncontrollable elements which could mar the smooth procedure of her programme—'flu, snow, trouble with the cooker or the boiler, recalcitrant behaviour by relatives. But she always had contingency arrangements, which could be whipped out and set in motion to cover a wide range of eventualities. She prided herself on thinking of everything. Almost everything.

Norma sat staring out of the window. She rubbed the condensation away and saw herself reflected in the glass—a small, neat woman of 55 with dark, cropped hair and a round, fresh face which cruised now over the gleaming roads, the wind-bent trees and the occasional scurrying pedestrian. The rain was sluicing down the windscreen; the gutters ran with water. Never mind. The shopping would all be under cover; they could park in the multi-storey. She was filled with a sense of well-being, a cheery uplift of spirits. Christmas. Good.

The traffic was thick now, slowed by the rain which swept across in white sheets, blotting out visibility. George was hunched over the steering-wheel, peering forward. The interior of the car was warm and intimate. Norma continued to feel expansive and benign. Bendicks chocs, she thought, for after dinner. And



something for old Mrs Freely opposite. She took out her list, and made additions.

"Awful rain . . ." she observed. "Is your brolly in the back?"

George was mildly deaf, and did not catch this. He was also finely attuned to the tone of remarks which were inconsequential and those which were not. He grunted, merely, and continued to steer the car into the torrents. He was a big, stolid man, with an air of stoical endurance.

At this moment Norma caught sight of the boy. He was standing at the side of the road, 50 yards or so ahead, with one thumb cocked out towards the traffic—a slight, stooped, sodden figure wearing an anorak dark with water and with his hair licked down to his head.

Even at the time she could not think what had come over her.

"Pull over," she found herself saying. "We'll give him a lift."

"What?" said George, startled.

"Pull in and pick that poor lad up. He's soaked through."

As the boy opened the back door of the car and stepped in Norma began to regret her sudden excess of charitable feeling. He was going to make the upholstery all wet. He might smoke. Oh well.

"We're going into the city centre," she said briskly. "That all right for you?"

The boy did not reply. He seemed to mutter something. Norma thought him either ill-mannered or overcome with diffidence. She made various remarks which, equally, met with no response, and then she lapsed into silence. George said nothing. The rain continued to lash down. The car was filled now with a ripe fug—the reek of damp clothes and the pervasive presence of their passenger.

They were approaching a big intersection on the outskirts of the city. Norma addressed the boy: "Do you want to come right into town? Or shall we put you down earlier?"

The boy spoke, at last. After 20 seconds or so. He said: "Jus' drive. Not into Brum. Jus' go straight on."

Norma thought he could not have heard her properly. She said: "We're turning off soon. Do you want to come into the centre, or shall we drop you?"

She felt the boy moving on the seat. She turned her head. And saw the boy's hand come forward, holding a gun, a small black thing which came to rest against the back of George's neck.

George said: "Oy! What's..." He took one hand off the steering-wheel, as though to swot a fly.

Norma said: "George, don't do anything. Just go on driving." And George, perplexed, put his hand back on the wheel and tried to see what was going on in the driving mirror.

There were always potential disruptions to mar the smooth procedure of Norma's Christmas programme. But she had her contingency arrangements.

The boy had not known until then that he was going to do this. He had been going to hold up a post office, or some small shop, because someone he knew had done that and it had worked out pretty well. He had acquired the gun, and then he had set off in search of a post office or shop, but before he found one it had started chucking down and he had got fed up with the wet and decided to hitch a lift instead. And, once inside the car, he had looked at the back of the man's neck, fat and fleshy, and imagined pushing the gun into it, and remembered too that someone else he knew had held up some people in a car. So he had done it, just like that.

"George," said Norma. "This boy has a gun. He is pointing it at you. I think you should just go on driving while we sort things out." She spoke very loudly and clearly; this was not an occasion for misunderstandings. She was surprised at how calm she felt. She realised that her life had spun out of control, that she was without contingency arrangements, but so far she was keeping cool. Reasonably cool.

George said: "What does he want?"

Norma had thought, rapidly. She now spoke to the boy. "We'll give you all the cash we have, and then put you down at the intersection. Right?" Her voice shook a bit. Maybe she wasn't quite so calm.

The boy considered this. It might do. He said: "How much you got?"

Norma turned out her purse. She asked George for his wallet. George nodded. There was a total of £35 and some loose change. She told the boy. This is the age of plastic money.

The boy displayed emotion for the first time. He sounded quite annoyed. "Thass no good."

Road signs loomed, and the swirl of the intersection.

"Take the city-centre turn," hissed Norma.

"What?" said George.

"Don't talk to each other, see?" instructed the boy. He jabbed the gun into George's neck. George flinched. "Jus' go on driving. Straight on. Not Brum."

They swished across the intersection.

"Where, then?" said Norma. Her voice sounded shrill, even to her. Calm down. Think.

The boy had no idea what next. He had simply wanted to get out of the rain, and now he was out of it, and these people had to do what he said, which was satisfactory, but that was about as far as it went. He said: "Shut up!"

Norma sat tense, immersed in scurrying thought. George drove. Once, he began to speak. He said: "Look here, what I suggest is . . ." and the boy simply said "Shut up!" again, and jabbed the gun.

"Listen," said Norma. "We'll drive to a cash dispenser, and I'll get out and get more money. Much more. Then you go, right?"

The boy could see a flaw in this, but he couldn't put a finger on it. So he said nothing. He waited—for something to happen, or for some idea to arrive.

His silence was unnerving. He breathed heavily. He had a cold, Norma realised. Automatically, she opened the window a little, while her head continued to churn. She made calculations, flew from one eventuality to another, ended up down blind alleys, retraced her steps, began again.

George drove on. The rain lashed down. The windscreens wipers whined to and fro. Norma spoke once more: "Let us go, and you can take the car. We'll pull in, and he'll give you the keys, and you can just let us go, and take the car. Right?"

"What?" said George, "Hang on, I'm not so sure . . ."

"No," said the boy.

"It's J registration. GL. Automatic."

"I can't drive, can I?" said the boy irritably.

Norma subsided, all washed up.

"The boy said: "Go to Sheffield."

"Sheffield!" exclaimed Norma.

George said: "What?"

"He wants us to drive him to Sheffield."

The boy had seen the name on a sign and remembered that he'd once had a mate who lived in Sheffield. He had no idea where Sheffield was. He was 17, and knew little.

"All right," said Norma. She tried to

catch George's eye, to tell him that she was thinking. Thinking hard. "All right. We'll drive you to Sheffield. OK?" And in the mean time—she transmitted to George, feverishly—I'm thinking. Working something out. Just drive.

George drove. All around, Norma saw, the world was continuing on its tranquil way without them. Christmas trees twinkled in the windows of complacent homes; each shop, each filling-station, each café was jewelled with Christmas lights. It occurred to her that if the worst came to the worst Christmas would hurtle ahead regardless. Outrage and disbelief were added to her fear.

The boy was hungry. He'd been hungry all along, but the problem was now becoming acute. He had not eaten for quite a while, for various reasons. They passed a Happy Eater and a McDonald's. His hunger now became his most pressing concern. He forgot about Sheffield and tried to work out how to get food. He could take what money they'd got and tell the man to pull in, and then he'd just clear off. It wasn't raining so hard now. But they'd go to the police, and he didn't want that. Now that he'd got them, he didn't really know what to do with them. And if he didn't get some nosh soon he'd go crazy. The problem made him bad-tempered.

Within Norma's head there now boiled simultaneous sequences of thought. One of these planned, speculated, explored possibilities, telegraphed silent queries to George. The other related what had happened—was happening—to some unspecified future listener: "I simply don't know what came over me. We never pick up hitch-hikers. But there he was, standing in the rain, and for some extraordinary reason I said to George . . ."

"Where'd you live?"

Startled, Norma told him.

"How far's that?"

She consulted George. "Ten—12 miles," said George.

The boy was silent for a moment. Then—"Go there."

"What's he say?" inquired George.

"He says we're to go to our house."

Norma was now fizzing with anxiety and questions. What did this mean?

Suppose he . . . ? What if . . . ? She could sense George, too, ticking away beside her in calculation. He said: "Have to turn round, you know. It's in the opposite direction." His tone was propitiating, conciliatory. Norma took comfort from this. Take it easy, he meant. Don't annoy the fellow.

"Turn round, then," said the boy.

George did so, at the next roundabout. They swished back across the intersection, back past the spot at which they had acquired their passenger, back past houses and shopping precincts seen earlier in what now seemed some other incarnation.

"What food you got in your house?" demanded the boy.

Norma jumped. None of them had spoken for some while.

"Food?"

Lots of food. The turkey, in the freezer. The stuffing. The pudding and the brandy butter and the smoked salmon. The *boeuf en daube* for the in-laws tomorrow evening.

Enlightenment dawned. He was hungry. Hope. Guile. "Sausages," she said. "Bacon. Eggs. Baked beans."

Or . . . A prolonged hold-up? A siege? Hope crumbled.

The boy sniffed, succulently. She wanted to hand him a Kleenex. Here he was, possibly about to shoot them, and she wanted to hand him a Kleenex. Sniffing exasperated her, always.

They were just a few minutes from home now. Her thoughts ran helter-skelter, goaded by alternating hope and panic. The phone. The neighbours. Would he . . . ? Could they . . . ?

The car turned into the drive in front of the house, pulled up. George said: "Here we are, then." That mollifying tone, still.

The boy was agitated. It was in his voice, his movements. "Get out and go to the door. Don't talk. Open the door and go in."

He herded them towards the house. They both, now, saw the gun clearly—pointing at them, now at one, now at the other. It was not very big—but that didn't tell you anything, did it? Norma's experience of firearms was derived entirely from TV serials—George's also, so

far as she knew. He was a personnel manager, and had been excused National Service on account of an asthmatic condition.

They were in the house. Home. But not, in these circumstances, home at all. The whole thing was unearthly—the sort of affair you read about in newspapers, the misadventure of hapless, unknown folk.

The boy was looking about him, distracted. His eye fell on the telephone. He reached out and took the receiver off the hook. He opened the sitting-room door and looked in.

Norma sidled up to George. She muttered: "I'm going to . . ."

The boy swung round. "Shut up, you stupid bitch!"

It seemed to Norma that all her hair stood on end—that her neat, cropped thatch simply rose, as though electrified. She had never been addressed thus in her life. Well, not since school-days. She felt violated. She was angry, as well as frightened.

"OK, OK," said George. "Let's all calm down."

The boy could see the central problem now. It was that there were the two of them. He had remembered that the guy he'd known who'd done something like this had a mate with him. As it was, he was in difficulties. He needed the woman to get him something to eat. The man was an encumbrance. He eyed George, thinking about this.

They stood there. The hall clock ticked—a reassuring sound normally, which now was not. And then the boy said: "Where's the food?"

Norma pointed to the kitchen door, speechless still.

He pushed them ahead of him again. In the kitchen the fridge placidly hummed, the washing-machine blinked a red eye to say that its cycle was complete. The room was immaculate, the table laid ready for lunch. Christmas cards on the dresser, a scarlet poinsettia on the window-ledge.

The boy looked round, then he stared at George in a way that neither George nor Norma cared for.

He indicated one of the chairs. "Sit down." He brandished the gun.

George sat.

The boy now reached for the washing-up cloths. Norma's new, matching Irish linen cloths. He fished in the pocket of his jeans and took out a knife. A small, very shiny knife. He slashed the cloths and began to rip them into strips. The Pococks watched, mesmerised: the knife, the disintegration of the cloths.

The boy tied George to the chair, making heavy weather of it. He was clumsy with his hands, Norma saw; she

As the boy opened the back door of the car and stepped in Norma began to regret her excess of charitable feeling. He would make the upholstery wet.

“I simply don’t know what came over me. We never pick up hitch-hikers. But there he was standing in the rain, and for some reason I said to George . . .”

could have done a better job herself. The knife was tucked into his back pocket and the gun lay on the floor beside him. Norma, her head spinning, noted this—she calculated, dithered, saw George do the same—and then he was immobilised, legs strapped to the legs of the chair, arms bound together behind his back.

The boy stood up, snuffling. He wiped his nose with his hand. Then he waved towards the fridge. “What you got in there?”

Norma walked over to the fridge and opened the door. She found the power of speech: “Sausages . . . bacon . . .”

The boy looked over her shoulder into the lit and furnished interior. He pointed to the *boeuf en daube*, in its casserole covered with clingfilm, waiting to be reheated for the in-laws. “What’s that?”

“It’s . . . a sort of stew.”

“Take it out.”

She did so. The boy pulled off the clingfilm, sniffed. “I’ll have that. Make it hot. And some chips.”

She stared at him, aghast. It was this, perhaps, that finally broke her spirit. Sullenly, she put the casserole into the microwave.

“I’ve got oven chips in the freezer.”

“That’ll do,” said the boy.

They watched him eat. He ate voraciously, but was at last defeated by the *daube*, which had been intended for four. He pushed the dish to one side. He sat there for a few minutes, looking thoughtful. Then he addressed George: “Got any beer?”

George indicated the cupboard under the dresser.

Furnished with a six-pack, the boy drank a can, and then half of another. He didn’t know what to do now. He found this place appallingly oppressive, and the people were getting on his nerves. He finished off the second can of beer, pondering. Then he got up and wandered around the kitchen, rummaging in drawers. He became irritable.

He turned to Norma and said: “C’mon.”

“Now, look here . . .” George began.

“Shut up! You start anything stupid and I’ll blow her head off, see?” He gave Norma a shove in the direction of the

door and hustled her out into the hall. “Upstairs!”

They climbed the stairs. Norma, seething with anxiety and indignation, saw the familiar blue pile of the carpet and then—as the boy opened doors, peered inside rooms, and pushed her again ahead of him—the neat, calm and now somehow inaccessible interior of her own bedroom. She stood there, her heart thumping, while the boy looked round, and then started to fling open drawers and cupboards.

Robbery. Of course. Well, that would be a small price to pay. The insurance was all in order, naturally. Best simply to tell him where she kept her jewel-case.

“In the right-hand drawer of the dressing-table,” she said, icily.

The boy stared at her. He opened the drawer, flipped through the contents dismissively. “Where’s yer tights?”

Norma gaped.

“Tights!” said the boy furiously. “Stupid git! I got to tie you up, haven’t I?”

Her heart pounded again. The easy option of robbery evaporated.

“Get them out!” ordered the boy, and she moved stiffly to the chest of drawers in which lay new packets of tights and the plastic bags labelled “LADDERED” and “UNLADDERED”. She later realised that even in her traumatised condition her hand had fallen upon the “LADDERED” bag.

They went downstairs again. Norma saw at once that George had been making frantic efforts to free himself. The boy glanced suspiciously at her, thrust Norma into a chair and set about trussing her up. As a finishing touch he now supplied each of them with a gag in the form of a pair of Norma’s tights. He seemed to be in a great hurry. The job was not done with much efficiency. Norma’s right foot had an inch or two of play, she found. She and George eyed each other, across the table, speculating and signalling.

The boy found some more cash in George’s desk. He also found George’s father’s fob-watch, which he quite fancied, so he took that too. He looked at the sofa and considered having a kip, and then decided against that. He really hated this place—it gave him the creeps.

So he opened the French windows and went quietly out into the garden, whence he achieved the road again by climbing over the wall. He headed at once for the sound of traffic, away from this oppressive area of silent houses and quiet streets.

As soon as he was on the busy road again, amid shops and pubs and flowing traffic, he more or less forgot the Pococks. He had a bit of money now, and he wasn’t hungry any more, so what he needed was an arcade, with some really good video games. He started to look for one, and then he heard the banshee wail of a police car, a noise he always found unsettling, so he hopped on a bus, and sat there looking out of a window until after a mile or two he spotted an arcade, and it didn’t look half bad, so he hopped off again.

He left the gun in the bus, on the seat, because he had some cash now, enough to be going on with, so he didn’t need it any more. The gun was found within minutes by another passenger, who happened to be a retired teacher and knew a starting-pistol when he saw one and therefore was not especially perturbed, merely handing it over to the conductor for consignment to the lost-property office.

It took the Pococks five minutes to be pretty certain that the boy had gone and another 10 to fight their way out of their bonds. The police arrived very shortly after George’s phone call; Norma heard the siren as she stood in the kitchen, her heart still banging around unnaturally, and she thought it the most exquisite sound she had ever heard. She felt as though she were surfacing from a bad dream and as she did so her normal faculties came slowly back into play. By the time the police were in the house, requiring information, she could think of nothing except how to get on course again for Christmas. She had tipped the remains of the *daube* into the dustbin and was busily working out a schedule for its replacement: quick foray to Sainsbury’s (which would be jam-packed, dammit . . .) for the wherewithal to knock up a quick casserole for tomorrow. “What?” she said to the policeman. “Well, I simply don’t know what came over me. But there he was, standing in the rain, and for some extraordinary reason . . .”

She felt almost steady now, but as she talked she glimpsed unnerving alternative scenarios which she did not want to contemplate, not now or ever. All that mattered was to get back to her personal struggle to harness the perverse and wilful forces all round. She did not want to think about the boy, who was even now continuing his fractured progress from one eventuality to the next, a few miles and a whole world away □

Ahhhh

THE SUNRISE SIDE OF INDIA.



Situated on the eastern, or sunrise-side of India, the state of Orissa is only now emerging from the shadows as a prime tourist destination. Easily accessible via all of India's gateway airports, and characterised by paddy fields and lush green wilderness, Orissa is a veritable museum of India's sculptural and artistic heritage. Its appeal is epitomised by the triangle formed by Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark. At Bhubaneswar the great beehive-shaped tower of the 11th century Lingaraj temple can be seen from 15km away, but this is dwarfed at Puri where the temple of Jagannath ("Lord of the Universe") soars into the skies. Every year in



JUGGERNAUTS AT PURI

mid-summer its deities are paraded in huge chariots (hence the English word "juggernauts") amidst much fervour and excitement.

A chariot of colossal dimensions is the predominant motif at Konark, where the magnificent Sun Temple

sits in solitary splendour a mile from the sea which it originally bordered. "Here the language of stone surpasses the language of man" remarked the poet Tagore. Most visitors are simply lost for words.

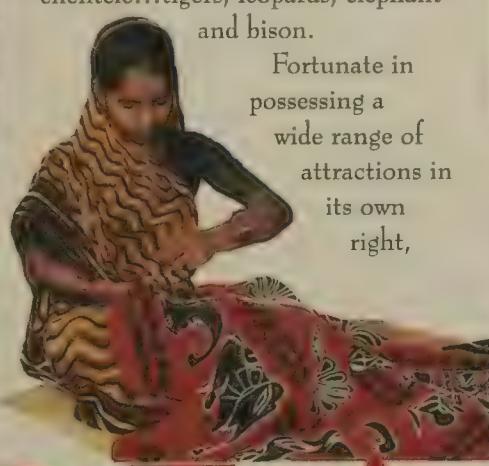
Just south of Puri, the largest mixed salt and freshwater lake in Asia, the vast inland Chilka Lake, plays host during the winter migratory



SUN TEMPLE, KONARK

season (luckily the best time of year to visit Orissa) to Siberian orangs, flamingoes from the Persian Gulf, pelicans, cormorants and many other species. Further afield lies the renowned Simlipal Game Reserve which boasts a different sort of clientele...tigers, leopards, elephant and bison.

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INDIAhh

ONLY 9 HOURS AWAY

S

MANER & MITCHENSON



Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloone and the Clown are the original pantomime characters. Right, Derek Newark and Robert Stephens as the Ugly Sisters in the National Theatre's 1983 production of Cinderella.

ince I was born in Canada, my childhood had not prepared me for the experience of pantomime. It was in 1950 that my newly-acquired job as a theatre critic first brought me into contact with this strange English ritual. I was truly dropped into the deep end, for that Christmas I had to give my views on *Babes in the Wood*, *Mother Goose* and *Goody Two Shoes*.

I had briefed myself reasonably well about the history and the traditions of this theatrical form. Pantomime was the harlequinade wedded to the fairy-tale

and adopted by the music-hall. Its menu offered fantasy, melody, ritual, spectacle and slapstick. I had learnt about the transvestite aspect of the characters and the ingredients of the Fairy Ballet and the Transformation Scene. I had boned up on the functions of the Dame, the Broker's Men, Buttons, the Pantomime Cat and the Principal Boy.

I was considerably underwhelmed by the experience. "Should the same dialogue, same choreography, same performers, same costumes, same routines ever appear in the West End without the

cloak of pantomime and the amiability of Christmas to protect them," I wrote, "financial retribution would come to them swiftly, suddenly and without pity." It was an attack that roused many readers of the London *Evening Standard* to splenetic fury. "What are we to make of Shulman's hammer-like attack on that gossamer thing, pantomime?" read one letter. "He tells us at the beginning that he has never seen a pantomime until now. What an infinitely dreary, colourless childhood his must have been."

Yet in my disenchantment with

DONALD COOPER

THE PANTO PARADOX

Milton Shulman ponders the lasting appeal of pantomime—to him a silly, endearing and uniquely British art-form—which has nevertheless been flexible enough to absorb modern television, advertising and pop-music folk culture.





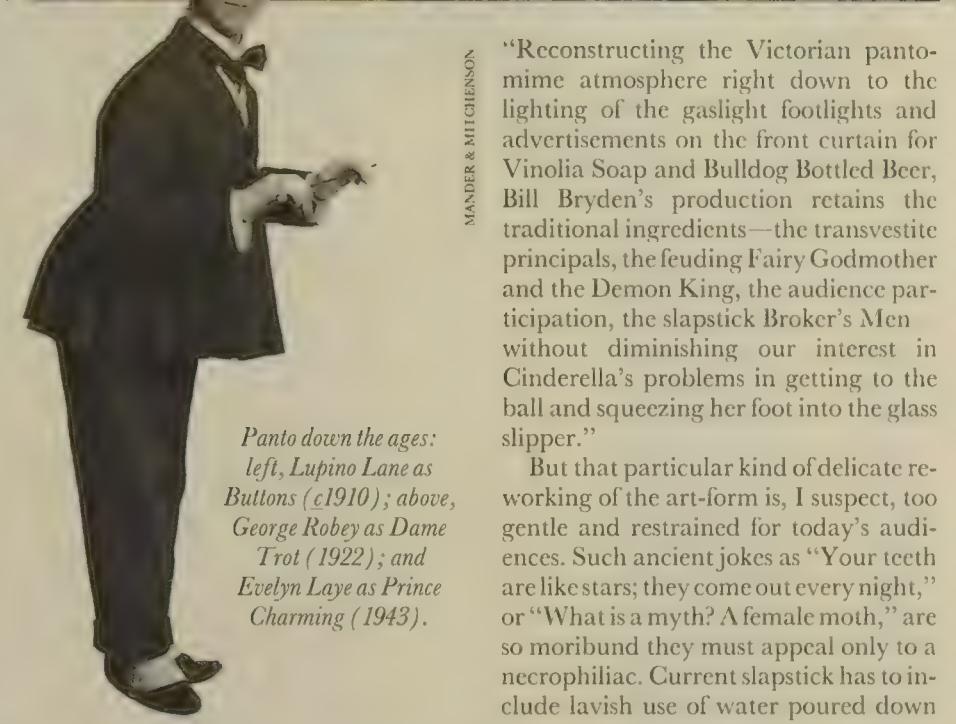
pantomime I had joined an illustrious company. Bernard Shaw was "bored and disgusted" by them and moaned that "Not one has amused me." Horace Walpole bewailed pantomime's falling standards as early as 1782. And in *The Illustrated London News* of 1846 a critic declaimed "The Christmas pantomimes have been getting worse and worse for some years. Ask any respectable playgoer and he will tell you that pantomimes are not what they used to be."

Nothing on the legitimate stage has suffered as much critical abuse as this eccentric art-form. Foreigners have not only been baffled by it but have seen in the sartorial mixing of the sexes evidence of aberrant national tendencies. Moralists complain that it relies on too many cheap, sleazy jokes for a children's entertainment. Feminists decry the image of women as targets for vulgar humour. Purists insist that the present reliance upon television programmes and advertising slogans for its inspiration has robbed pantomime of its charm and innocence.

What, then, is the secret of its survival? I suspect that British reverence for traditional institutions may be part of the explanation. But even more important has been its adaptability. Pantomime is the chameleon of the theatre with a wondrous ability to acquire the colour of the times. From its Victorian days it has weeded out such obscure shows as *Harlequin Munchhausen*, *Blue Beard* and *Ali the Woodman* and concentrated on regular favourites like *Babes in the Wood*, *Cinderella*, *Dick Whittington*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Aladdin*, *Mother Goose* and *Puss in Boots*.

To make these fairy-tales palatable to modern audiences the pantomime has blatantly recruited the attractions of the television, film, pop-music and sporting worlds to help keep it alive. Although primarily aimed at children, the scripts are replete with sexual innuendo and robust reference to politicians to ensure that parents are amused.

Having attended more than 100 pantomimes since I was first introduced to them, I have occasionally come across a production that engenders some true enchantment and magic, but most of them have provoked the reactions reflected in a review of a 1987 version of *Babes in the Wood* at the Palladium, starring the television comedians Cannon and Ball, and Barbara Windsor. "This is kitchen pantomime," I wrote, "in the sense that anything is thrown on the stage, *including* the kitchen sink. The appeal of Cannon and Ball certainly escapes me. As the funny men, the high point of their humour appeared to be having Cannon smash a plate in the



Panto down the ages:
left, Lupino Lane as
Buttons (c.1910); above,
George Robey as Dame
Trot (1922); and
Evelyn Laye as Prince
Charming (1943).

Opposite, a medley of modern pantomimes, which includes *Cinderella*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Aladdin and His Lamp*, *Puss in Boots*, *Dick Whittington* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Tradition dictates there is a Principal Boy, played by a girl, a Dame, played by a man, and often an animal—goose, cow or horse—played by one or two actors.

groin of the aptly-named Ball. Swamped by costumes that must have put a severe strain on the nation's stock of silver lamé, it is sad to see the waste of such talents."

Yet only a few years earlier, in 1983, Bill Bryden's production of *Cinderella* at the National Theatre showed that pantomime at Christmas need not be an opportunity for tasteless designers to shower a stage with feathers and rhinestones and for lazy writers to rely upon leers and catch-phrases for easy laughs from undemanding audiences. I wrote:

"Reconstructing the Victorian pantomime atmosphere right down to the lighting of the gaslight footlights and advertisements on the front curtain for Vinolia Soap and Bulldog Bottled Beer, Bill Bryden's production retains the traditional ingredients—the transvestite principals, the feuding Fairy Godmother and the Demon King, the audience participation, the slapstick Broker's Men without diminishing our interest in Cinderella's problems in getting to the ball and squeezing her foot into the glass slipper."

But that particular kind of delicate reworking of the art-form is, I suspect, too gentle and restrained for today's audiences. Such ancient jokes as "Your teeth are like stars; they come out every night," or "What is a myth? A female moth," are so moribund they must appeal only to a necrophiliac. Current slapstick has to include lavish use of water poured down trouser-legs and custard pies hurled in abundance. The topical references always over the heads of the children will be to John Major or to salmonella or, more obscurely, will have someone shout, "The mosque is on fire!" and Sinbad exclaim "Holy smoke!" There may even be glancing asides about gays, lesbianism and bondage for more sophisticated adults.

The children, encouraged to hiss, boo and leap about, will enjoy themselves yelling "Oh, no it isn't!", but I am not sure there is any burning desire on the part of most under-10s to see Frank Bruno or Ian Botham making bit-part appearances in this Christmas fare. Children want to be taken out for a treat, and almost any occasion will please them if it allows them to be stuffed with ice-cream and sweets for an entire evening. I once asked a five-year-old if he had enjoyed his visit to the circus. "Oh, yes,"

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where you'll see,
two by two, all the
creatures that
voyaged in the Ark.
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DONALD COOPER

The National Theatre's 1990 production of The Wind in the Willows attracted young Christmas audiences.

he said. "All that room under the seats."

Those who predict a slow death for the pantomime can point to the fact that the London Palladium, which used to be known as the flagship of the pantomime world, has for the last three years deserted the genre and occupied its stage with shows like a farcical version of the television series 'Allo 'Allo and a revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. There have also been impressive productions of *Peter Pan* from the RSC and *The Wind in the Willows* at the National Theatre to draw the Christmas trade and prove that well-made children's classics can offer formidable competition for young audiences.

But, as yet, premature pallbearers predicting the demise of pantomime may have a coffin ready but no body to put into it. There will probably be some 200 pantos on stage this Christmas throughout Britain. The management most dedicated to the species is E & B Productions which has 20 shows filling provincial theatres. In Cardiff Roy Hudd appears in *Babes in the Wood*; in Woking Des O'Connor in *Cinderella*; in Newcastle Su Pollard in *Dick Whittington*; in Stockport Max Boyce and Ian Botham in *Jack and the Beanstalk*; and in Eastbourne is another *Cinderella* with Dora Bryan. It is estimated that about four million paying customers will be taking vociferous sides in the nightly feuds between Jack and the Giant, Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham, and Goldilocks and the Bears. Children can become passionately involved in these altercations and I remember at one performance hearing,

as the Fairy Queen was being threatened by the Demon King, an urgent Cockney voice crying, "Sock 'im with your wand, Fairy! Sock 'im with your wand!"

The panto business is so lucrative that amateur actors like Frank Bruno can make £20,000 a week for an eight-week season. Sportsmen with charismatic appeal are required only to continue breathing on the stage and not to bump into the furniture. Maureen Paton, the *Daily Express* theatre critic, wrote of Ian Botham's performance as the King in *Jack and the Beanstalk*: "The expressionless Botham is the only wooden thing on stage apart from the beanstalk—and even that projects itself better."

However, the popularity of pantomime helps some theatres survive that might otherwise be forced to close. In addition to providing rich pickings for showbiz personalities, it gives employment to thousands of actors, chorus-girls and stage-hands who might otherwise find Christmas financially a bleak affair.

When I attacked the quality of some recent pantomimes last Christmas in the *Evening Standard*, the actor Jonathan Cecil delivered a spirited defence on their behalf. As a supporter of this silly, endearing, uniquely British art-form, he made a valiant attempt to solve the mystery of pantomime's appeal.

"Pantomime is, to the rest of the theatre," he wrote, "like an ever-so-slightly disreputable relation, an uncle perhaps, arriving for Christmas dinner, florid, even a little tipsy, guzzling the nuts and tangerines. The hosts should disapprove of him but, they have to admit, it is he, rather than his worthier cousins, who keeps the party going and the children amused." □



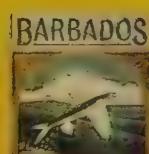
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AUSTRIA'S CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

December is a month of feasting and traditional festivities in Austria's towns and villages, writes James Munson.



An Austrian Christmas conjures up images of Drosselmeyer, Clara and her nutcracker prince, of fir trees and new-fallen snow, of *Vanillekipferln* and *Santaklos*. In truth, Christmas in this gentlest of German-speaking nations is a month's celebration rich in ancient peasant customs, a country holiday, a *heurige Weihnacht*.

Traditionally the season begins on December 6, St Nicholas's Day, when processions wind through many villages and cities in honour of the patron saint of children. In Innsbruck, St Nicholas and his attendants pass candle-lit windows, giving sweets and fruit to children along the way. On arrival in the square in front of the city's famous Golden Roof the crowd listens to an address from the "bishop saint". Just as English children traditionally hang up stockings for Father Christmas to fill, Austrians put shoes in the window, hoping for presents from St Nicholas. Surprisingly, in such a small country, the saint has many names: normally he is Nikolaus; in the eastern part of Austria he is Nikolo, Niglo or even Miglo, while in the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg he answers to Santaklos or, to those who know him well, simply Klos. As befits this Catholic country, St Nicholas is usually celibate, but in the provinces of Lower Austria and Styria he is married to the termagant Nikolofrau.

Even more fierce than Nikolofrau is the masked, malevolent Krampus, a nasty piece of work who accompanies St Nicholas to pick up wayward children, whom he transports to a place far hotter than Austria in December. At least, that is the theory. In practice St Nicholas protects naughty Austrian children from the devilish fate prepared for them. In the village of Rauris, some 40 miles south of Salzburg, St Nicholas's Day is ushered in the night before by a group of young men known as *Schiachperchten*. Carrying brooms, scissors and a large basket, they parade round the village in ragged clothes, straw shoes, ugly, 2-foot-high, peaked masks and caps like those worn

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Real Christmas trees are de rigueur in Austria, whether in the home, above, or by the side of this tiny chapel in Salzburg province, right.

by Spanish penitents during Lent. Their object seems to be twofold: to frighten winter away and, like the dreaded Krampus, to collect bad children.

As in the rest of Europe, Christmas revolves around youngsters. Those who wish to write to Father Christmas are given an address by the Austrian Post Office. All letters received there between November 28 and January 6 and enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope receive a reply dispatched from the post office at Christkindl (Christ-child), a village near Steyr, in Upper Austria.

On Advent Sunday the Advent calendar, claimed as an Austrian creation, is brought out. If legend is to be believed, an Austrian mother attached 24 pieces of cake to cardboard for her son, one piece to be eaten each day (the story says nothing about the quality of the 24th piece). The boy grew up, set up a printing house and from 1903 issued calendars, with pictures replacing his mother's cake.

The decoration of Christmas trees is taken extremely seriously by Austrians: not for them artificial trees or plastic baubles. However, the tradition is no more native to Austria than to England. Just as the Christmas tree was brought here from Protestant Germany by King George III's consort, Queen Charlotte, and popularised by Prince Albert, in Austria it was introduced by the wife of Archduke Karl, the first general to defeat Napoleon. The influence of the Archduchess, the former Henriette von Nassau-Weilburg, was such that in the years following her marriage in 1815 her Christmas tree became the height of fashion.

In the early 19th century Austrians decorated their trees with paper roses, fruit, cakes and nuts. Later, glass ornaments were added, though in recent years many people have been returning to earlier customs. Although electric lights have made some inroads, most Austrians prefer still to use the traditional small candles.

Many places hold special Christmas markets. In Salzburg the Christkindlmarkt, situated in front of the cathedral, opens on November 26 with fanfares and a carol service. In Innsbruck there is the Tiroler Heimatwerk on Meraner Strasse where you can buy, at a price, the hand-carved wooden decorations for which the Tyrol is famous. In Vienna there is a good market near the Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna's equivalent of Oxford Street. It is actually in the Spittelberg where, it is said, Mozart used to play skittles. In the main market in front of the Rathaus, or city hall, on the Ringstrasse, you will find Vienna's Christmas tree, a gift to the capital from the eight provincial states.

In addition to the tree there is usually a Christmas crib—a creation for which the Tyrol is renowned. Inside are wax figures with, in place of honour, the Christ-child. This particular image has a special meaning for Austrians because of a 17th-century miracle that led to the founding of Christkindl church. In 1695 Ferdinand Sertl, an organist who was an



epileptic, was given just such a wax figure by some nuns who admired the way in which he coped with his infirmity. Sertl put it into the hollow of a tree and prayed for a cure, which was granted. The story of the miracle spread; 13 years later the foundation stone for a church was laid on the site of the tree and the high altar was built round it. In 1985 Sertl's wax figure was discovered in the church loft and now rests in a niche above the door to the vestry.

Some extraordinary customs for the days before Christmas have been kept alive. In Oberndorf, the village where "Silent Night" was composed in 1818, boatmen unable to work on the frozen Salzach river used to go round asking for supplies to survive the winter. The custom died out, but was revived in 1924 and men now walk round with lanterns, bells, and a crib on top of a 6-foot-high pole collecting money for charity.

Public carol concerts are held throughout Austria, one of the most famous taking place at the Grosses Festspielhaus, in Salzburg. In the beautiful village of Igls, long a favourite of British visitors, a torch-lit procession symbolising the arrival of Christ takes place on December 23. Some 250 local children parade in nativity costumes through the village to an outdoor stage at its centre where they enact a tableau vivant of the manger scene. Many spectators come up the mountain to Igls from nearby



PIERRE HUSSON/AGENCE TOP

Festive food in many forms, above, is sold in the Christkindlmarkt in Vienna, right, along with decorations, presents and warming *Glühwein*. Below, Innsbruck's main square, where "St Nicholas" addresses crowds from the Golden Roof on December 6.

Innsbruck, some travelling on the tram that runs through the forest.

The principal day for Christmas celebrations is Christmas Eve—the German for Christmas is, after all, "consecrated night". It is a public holiday, as are Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, and is essentially a family occasion. In the morning there is time for last-minute shopping: Salzburg's Christkindlmarkt is closed at noon when cannons boom forth from the Hohensalzburg fortress and the Kapuzinerberg, which dominate the two sides of the Salzach river. Immediately the bells of Salzburg begin to peal forth. People often devote the afternoon to gathering round the graves of family and friends, decorating them with flowers and candles, and singing hymns.

Once back home, they launch the celebrations in earnest. The Christmas-tree candles are lit, presents are exchanged and the eating begins. Austria, unlike the English-speaking world, is not wholly committed to eating turkey or any particular meat dish at Christmas and the food varies according to the region. In Vienna and eastern Austria fish is favourite, especially carp. Others prefer goose, accompanied by stuffing made with chestnuts, fried onions, chopped bacon, giblets and milk. However, like carp, goose is expensive and is giving way to turkey, duck, pork or beef, which are often accompanied by Sekt, a German champagne-type wine.

Popular Christmas fare includes roll-mops cut into pieces and mixed with diced green apples, gherkins, capers, soured cream, mayonnaise, ground black pepper and cocktail onions. Also on the menu are beef soup, veal sausages, glazed apples and spiced red cabbage seasoned with wine, vinegar, sugar and spices. Among sweeter fare are *Christstollen*, a delicious yeast bread filled with candied fruits and raisins, and *Früchtebrot*, similar to a British fruit cake. Each family has its own favourite, whether it is a *Sachertorte* or *Linzertorte* or a home-made chocolate cake. The enormous range of seasonal cakes are often cut into Christmas shapes and sprinkled with ground nuts or sugar. Popular drinks, especially in Vienna, include Sekt and, throughout Austria, *Glühwein*, a hot punch made of wine (usually red), fruit, sugar, spices and, for some, a little rum.

At night the cold, still air in Austria's cities, towns and villages is filled with the pealing of church bells. The main religious service is the midnight mass, or *Weihnachtsmesse* for which many women in the villages and smaller towns wear regional costume. In the Upper Austria and Salzburg regions these are beautiful, full-length silk dresses; elsewhere it is



ASCHER/AUSTRIAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE



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the more familiar dirndl, an embroidered bodice and full skirt, worn with a white blouse. On their heads women wear exquisite gold caps, made up of thousands of small, gold sequins. Taking up to 100 hours to make and often worth thousands of pounds, they are handed down from mother to daughter. Austria's cathedrals and abbeys uphold a wonderfully rich musical tradition with elaborate sung masses by the great Austrian composers Haydn and Mozart.

Christmas Day is reserved for the visits of close friends and, in the afternoon, a broadcast message from the President. To cope with visitors, most housewives set up buffets including the white sausages, or *Mettwurst*; in the Tyrol guests enjoy a hash made of smoked tongue, peas and mashed potatoes.

However, celebrations continue. In Bergheim, near Salzburg, on December 28 groups of young men wander through the village with chains, whips and rattles taking up collections—less for charity than for buying lager and schnapps.

New Year's Eve is St Silvester's Day, when Austria's major cities and towns host Silvester balls, grand affairs where the waltz is still king. Numerous schools exist to help those who need to brush up on the intricate steps of the Viennese waltz; the most famous of these is Willy Elmayer's, on the Bräunerstrasse, in Vienna's old city. Before setting out for the ball one should fortify the inner man with *Schweinebraten für Glück*—roast pork for luck—and afterwards with *Sülze*, little cakes shaped like pigs. Villages too

small to organise their own balls hold *Glühwein* parties and usher in the new year with fireworks.

The arrival of the new year is marked by its own customs. In the Tyrol, men dressed like bears dance in the streets. If they strike the shoulder of a man in the crowd little notice is taken, but if they touch a woman tradition says that she will become pregnant within the year.

A reminder of one Christmas custom lasts all year. Visitors may sometimes notice these symbols and letters chalked on door lintels:

+

19—K + M + B—92.

They record a visit made by the three kings, Kaspar, Melchior and Balthasar. Between January 1 and 6 families can request their houses to be visited by groups whose origins lie hidden in central European history. The "kings", personified by local men, arrive dressed in white smocks and wearing tall, black hats in the centre of which a space has been cut for a candle. As the house lights are turned out the kings, accompanied by a servant boy and carrying a Christmas crib, are let in and proceed through all the rooms with a thurible or censer to bless the house. Afterwards a collection is made for charity and glasses of schnapps are handed round. On departing, Kaspar, Melchior and Balthasar leave a token of their visit marked with a piece of chalk.

With the departure of the three wise men, the Christmas season comes to an end. As Austrians say, it is *ein schönes Fest*—a lovely celebration □

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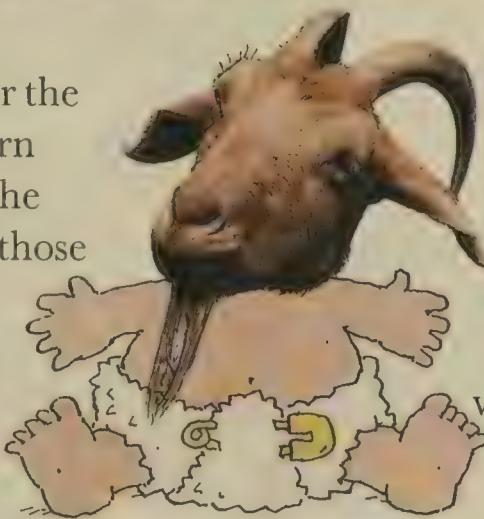
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CHRISTMAS BABIES

Now is the time to consider the destiny of those infants born under Capricorn, sign of the Goat. And, in particular, those kids whose nativity is on or around December 25. Patric Walker sketches the astrological profile of this ambitious group

Capricorn, the 10th sign of the zodiac, is ruled by Saturn and symbolised by the Goat. The first month of the year derives its name from Janus, the most ancient of Roman gods, represented by a double-faced head to signify his knowledge of both the present and the future. He was the god of the doorway and protector of all entrances.

The sign of the Goat, which begins on or about December 23 and ends on approximately January 20, is frequently maligned by modern practitioners of the art of astrology. Its ruler is Saturn or Chronos. Many celebrated writers and artists have drawn their inspiration from the personalities, myths and actions of the classical gods of ancient Greece or Rome. For instance, the owl of Athene or Minerva is associated with knowledge and learning, and the words jovial, mercurial, martial and so on are common parlance. Unfortunately, poor old Capricorn has been saddled with saturnine, meaning gloomy and surly. Yet, though typical Capricorns take life seriously, they are not the morose and wholly materialistic individuals astrological textbooks would have us believe. Saturnalia was a time when the woollen bands which bound the feet of the image



of Saturn were removed, feasting began, and masters and slaves reversed roles.

The decorous image of Capricorns can be misleading. Enterprising, shrewd and, at times, materialistic, deep down they have much in common with their opposites in the zodiac, Cancerians. They are sensitive, vulnerable, self-sacrificing and long-suffering. So, away with the idea that this is simply the sign of ambition, possessions, status symbols and worldly success. Saint Bernadette and Joan of Arc were both born with the Sun in Capricorn.

Chronos means time, and "Time," says Carl Sandburg, born January 6, 1878, "is a great teacher." While William James, born January 11, 1842, urged: "Be not afraid of Life. Believe that Life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact."

Maybe the driving force of this sign is devotion to the highest, an ardent desire to attain. Earnest, hard-working, practical, persevering and conventional Capricorns certainly are, but as the third and last of the earth signs (the others being Taurus and Virgo) Capricorn always has a goal in view. In astrology, earth represents the physical world and the senses, and any true Capricorn will understand these words of Kahlil

whose members are said to be serious, sometimes gloomy, but also enjoy the trappings of worldly success. Overleaf we survey 10 famous Capricorns who have shown themselves enterprising, hard-working and practical.

Gibran: "Then the ploughman said, speak to us of work. And he answered, saying—'You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.'" And later on: "Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a misfortune. But I say that when you work you fulfil a part of earth's furthest dream assigned to you when that dream was born. And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life. And to love life through labour is to be intimate with life's inmost secret."

Another salient point that often goes unnoticed is that the goat has a fish's tail. Therefore, although this is the sign of duty, responsibility and labour, the tail of the fish reminds us that the emotions run deep. Male or female, young or old, love is the light and sunshine of the Capricorn life. "Love," as Robert Browning reminds us, "is best, and our main purpose in life is to preserve it at its best. What is to live, if not to love?" And, in the words of Louis Bromfield, born December 27, 1896: "It may be that we have to lose that knowledge and understanding which children have and then perhaps it comes back to us through living, experience and wisdom."

□ The Patric Walker Birthday Book is published by Michael Joseph, £7.99 (royalties to the NSPCC).

TEN BABIES BORN AT CHRISTMAS

CHARLES BABBAGE 1792-1871

Known as the father of the modern computer, Charles Babbage was a Fellow of the Royal Society and Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge. But it was his work on the theory of logarithms and the construction of a giant calculating machine that earned him a place in history. Among his other accomplishments, he compiled the first reliable actuarial tables, invented the speedometer and designed a locomotive cow-catcher.



COLIN COWDREY CBE b 1913

Colin Cowdrey has more than lived up to the expectations of his cricketing father, who gave him the initials M.C.C. (Michael Colin Cowdrey) at birth. In 1950 he became the youngest player capped by Kent and went on to make 22 Test centuries, consistently scoring in excess of 1,000 runs in a season. He captained England in the West Indies (1967-68) and Kent (1957-71), and was president of the MCC (1986-87).

KING JOHN 1167-1216

In 1066 and *All That* King John is condemned as "A Bad Thing"—certainly, his character was quarrelsome. From the day he succeeded his brother Richard I in 1199 he warred with family, church and nobles at home and abroad. Rebellious barons forced him to sign Magna Carta in 1215. But John had a practical side, too, and was an energetic administrator, giving England a more efficient exchequer, law courts and chancery.

44

CONRAD HILTON 1887-1979

When Conrad Hilton bought his first hotel in the USA in 1919, he set about providing a service to businessmen that would guarantee them a consistent degree of luxury and standardised service. The chain expanded to Europe and beyond, and American tourists can now stay in Hilton hotels all over the globe without ever feeling they have left the comforts of home. When Hilton died, his hotel organisation had grown to become the largest in the world.



MAURICE UTRILLO 1883-1955

Utrillo's poverty-stricken childhood led him to early alcoholism, which his mother, the painter Suzanne Valadon, tried to control by encouraging him to paint. He had no formal training and suffered frequent bouts of illness, but his productivity was astonishing. He painted village scenes and the streets and cafés of Montmartre as he saw them: lonely and empty. By 1920 he was one of the most popular and famous of Paris painters.

KENNY EVERETT b 1944

This Liverpudlian made a name for himself as a controversial "naughty boy" disc jockey in the 1960s on the pirate ship Radio London. He was an early recruit to BBC's Radio One, but was sacked when he insulted a transport minister's wife. After some years' 'rustication' he was allowed back, but later rejoined commercial radio, hosting shows for Capital Radio from 1973 to 1980. He continues to work for both television and radio.

MAO TSE-TUNG 1893-1976

The son of a peasant farmer, Mao Tse-tung became a politically active student at the University of Peking, co-founding the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and eventually leading it, via the "Long March", to power. He was the architect of the "Great Leap Forward" (1957) and of the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-69), and the Little Red Book of his thoughts and sayings was waved by revolutionaries all over the world.

45

LORD GRADE b 1906

Lord Grade was born in Russia, the eldest of three brothers who were to dominate British show business for more than 40 years. An early champion of commercial television, he became managing director of ATV in 1962 and has headed a number of major film and entertainment companies.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON 1642-1727

The brilliant physicist and mathematician was lionized during his lifetime for his discovery of the principles of gravitation and for his optical studies. Hard-working, driven, but temperamentally unstable because of an unhappy childhood, he was knighted by Queen Anne in 1705.

AVA GARDNER 1922-1990

At the age of 17 Ava Gardner's sultry beauty was spotted by MGM and she was cast in a series of romantic films. Her Hollywood's most glamorous leading men. Her marriages to Mickey Rooney, Artie Shaw and Frank Sinatra gave her a reputation for being tempestuous and difficult. Her films include *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* and *On the Beach*.



Board games are ever-popular diversions. Gyles Brandreth looks at new versions of old favourites for Christmas.

SIT DOWN AND PLAY THE GAME



Permit me to be the first to break the good news. Britain is fully committed to a single European currency and, in the true spirit of Maastricht, London's Regent Street is being renamed Avenue Foch. Appropriately, given the size of the Mercedes showroom there, Park Lane has been relocated to make way for Kongsgade and, as a modest conciliation in the direction of Brussels, Pentonville Road will become Grande Place.

This is not Margaret Thatcher's worst nightmare come true, merely Waddingtons, of Leeds, recognising that politics is a game and cashing in on the Euro-debate with its European edition of Monopoly. The floating pound is replaced by the hard eur and the players travel around the 12 EC countries at the throw of the blue "harmonised Euro-dice" decorated with the Community's stars. Gone are the Old Kent Road and King's Cross station. Now players can collect rent from a fashionable house in Rome's Via Veneto (1,100 ecu), buy Luxembourg Airport (a snap at 2,000 ecu), invest in an exclusive hotel on the Paseo de la Castellana, in Madrid (5,000 ecu) or on the picturesquely Slottsgade, in Copenhagen (2,500 ecu); clearly the company is banking on the Danes ratifying the treaty in due course.

However well the game may be selling

on the Continent (and word in Brussels has it that Jacques Delors has already been given five sets by different members of his devoted staff), Britain's band of committed Euro-sceptics will be relieved to know that according to the latest W. H. Smith chart of top-selling games Euro-Monopoly is at No 37 and falling, behind Ludo, checkers and draughts, and the traditional all-British version of the game, which is at No 8 and climbing.

Dominating the best-seller list is Scrabble, with the main game at No 1, Magnetic Pocket Scrabble in second place and Travel Scrabble at No 6. The manufacturer, J. W. Spear and Sons, of Enfield, maintains that half the homes in Britain boast a Scrabble set and, with versions in a dozen languages on sale in 90 countries, claims that this is the world's "favourite" game. *Aficionados* (a legitimate Scrabble word, depending on which dictionary you use) include Roger Taylor (from Queen), the Queen (from Windsor) and Kate Adie (from the BBC). During the Gulf War the intrepid Adie played Scrabble with the troops at the front line, while hostages in Iraq were playing it to relieve the boredom of captivity. The universality of the game is such that the International Red Cross sent 2,000 sets of Arabic Scrabble to Iraqi prisoner-of-war camps.

Both Scrabble and Monopoly were



invented in the 1930s by out-of-work Americans hoping to make a fast buck during the Depression. Bucks they did eventually make by the million, but not fast and not without a struggle. When Charles Darrow offered Monopoly to Parker Brothers in 1934 the company rejected it outright on the grounds that it contained "52 fundamental playing errors". Alfred Butts began to devise Scrabble in 1931, but it was 20 years before it made any impact in the shops. It takes time and persistence to create a classic in the games world.

The only recent rival to the twin giants

Above, Atmosfear, one of the popular new games, tries to combine the appeal of the traditional board game and videos. Players receive their instructions from the "Gate-keeper" on the television.

of the genre has been Trivial Pursuit, conceived by three Canadians in the late 1970s. The idea of having players progress round a board on the basis of remembering the useless information absorbed over the years was formulated in 45 minutes over a game of Scrabble. Four years of frustration followed as the inventors struggled to market their

creation. They made a loss of \$45,000 on the first 1,100 prototypes and the 18-year-old artist who designed the board and logo in return for five shares in the company was less than pleased. He had changed his tune by 1985 when the game had taken off and two shares in Trivial Pursuit had acquired a value of more than \$1 million.

Because each game played is different, Scrabble and Monopoly offer infinite variety (of a sort). Trivial Pursuit, on the other hand, is based on immutable information, so it does not bear much repetition. "What famous Hollywood star died at the age of seven, yet had a son who also went on to star in the movies?" is a wonderful teaser first time around, but once you know that the answer is Rin Tin Tin you are not likely to forget. That is why there is now an annual edition of Trivial Pursuit. Every Christmas players are encouraged to stock up with a fresh set of arresting questions, and those who are still intrigued to discover that Pontius Pilate was a Yorkshireman or that Jayne Mansfield and Marie-Antoinette had identical bust measurements will probably do so.

It is remarkable how, in the television age, the traditional board game still holds sway at Christmas. Some manufacturers have attempted to get the best of both worlds. As well as traditional Cluedo from Waddingtons, there is a video version that brings Colonel Mustard and Miss Scarlett to life, and Spear's has high hopes for Atmosfear. In this scary board-cum-video adventure from Australia, players sit around the board in a darkened room while the game-master, a gruesome character called the Gate-keeper, screeches instructions from the small screen. At the latest count Atmosfear was at No 24 and rising, but it still has a long way to go before it overtakes the most consistently successful packaged game in history: a pack of playing cards (No 9 and holding steady).

Games manufacturers are now looking forward to the Christmas after next. The 1993 Christmas range was decided long ago, so anyone hoping to solve their financial difficulties by inventing a blockbuster should bear in mind that a new game will not reach the shops before 1994. But there are plenty of customers waiting for the right one. Apparently we human beings need to play games. According to the Dutch historian and philosopher Johan Huizinga, "Play adorns life, amplifies it and is to that extent a necessity, both for the individual—as a life function—and for society by reason of the meaning it contains, its significance, its expressive value, its spiritual and social associations." So there you have it. Anyone for Snap? □

Scrabble, in its various versions, continues to dominate the chart of the current best-sellers.





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AN AMERICAN PANORAMA

PHOTOGRAPHS
BY
HIROJI
KUBOTA



The Japanese photographer Hiroji Kubota, of Magnum, has spent three years and 3,500 rolls of film capturing spectacular images of the landscape, people and spirit of the United States. In the course of this enormous undertaking he visited every state, from Alaska to Hawaii, and recorded the vulgarity

and grace, the cacophony and peace of the country's diverse scenery and ways of life. His book, *From Sea to Shining Sea*, from which the following pictures are taken, has been described as a "mural of America", which sometimes reinforces and sometimes contradicts popular conceptions of the USA,

bringing together the familiar and the exotic, from New York's haze-shrouded forest of skyscrapers to the flat, geometrically precise fields of North Dakota, and from the austere natural beauty of Alaskan glaciers to the colour and vibrancy of the streets of New Orleans during Mardi Gras.

North America's highest peak (20,320 feet) is Mount McKinley, which lies within Denali National Park, in the icy heart of Alaska.



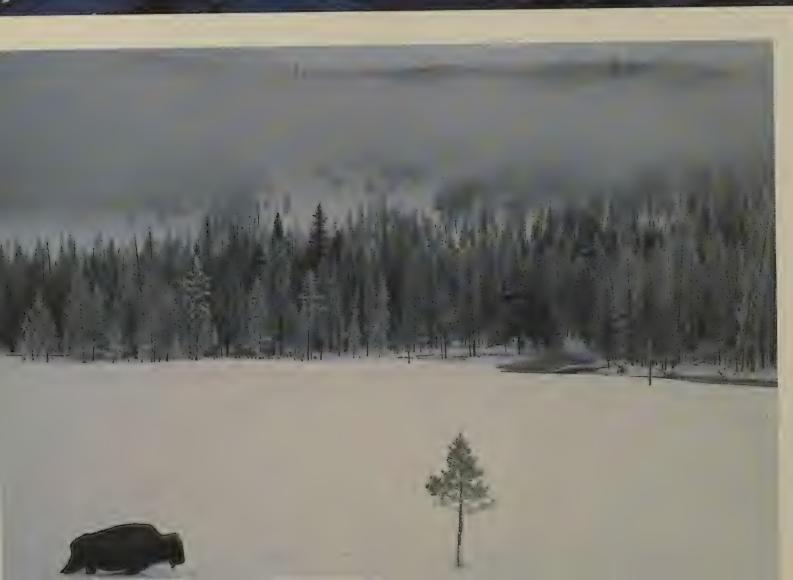
*Revellers at the Tavern
on the Green gaze
skywards at a firework
display heralding
the new year in Central
Park, Manhattan.*

*October sunlight pierces
the morning haze of
New York, gilding the grid
of streets beneath
Manhattan's monuments
to corporate power.*

*Some of the 25,000 runners
in the New York Marathon cross
Verrazano-Narrows Bridge
from Staten Island to Brooklyn.*







*Lake Powell, Utah,
was created in the 1960s
when the Colorado
river was dammed, flooding
ancient Indian sites.*

*Opened in 1872 as the
USA's first national park,
Yellowstone sees more
buffalo than tourists during
the winter months.*

*In contrast to the frenetic pace of life in
America's cities, fly-fishermen
exercise their skills and patience on the
denizens of Silver Creek, Idaho.*





*Only the patch of
land surrounding a farm
at Fargo, North
Dakota, hints at how the
landscape looked
before being given over
to intensive wheat
and barley production.*



*American festivals are many and varied,
but none is more colourful than
Mardi Gras when, in the weeks before
Ash Wednesday, New Orleans
devotes itself to music and masquerade.*



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THE MAN WHO WAS 80

Mildred Maybrick, seated in the front left-hand seat of the Daimler, thumped her copy of *The Times* into a manageable shape and said: "I see from the paper that Father shares his birthday with Julian Symons. They're both 80 today. That should please him. Quite a number of distinguished people have their anniversaries today but Mr Symons is the only one who is Father's age exactly. Quite a coincidence."

Rodney Maybrick grunted. Since neither their father nor either of them personally knew the distinguished crime writer he could not see why Mildred regarded the felicitously shared birthday as a coincidence. He wished, too, that she would not read the paper while he was driving. The perpetual rustle distracted him and, more dangerously, she was apt to turn over the pages with a flourish of disjointed leaves which momentarily obscured his vision. It was a relief when she completed her scrutiny of the court pages and the births, marriages and deaths, banged the paper into shape, although hardly the shape the publisher intended, and tossed it on the top of a wicker picnic-basket on the back seat. She was now able to give her attention to the purpose of their journey.

"I've put in a bottle of Pouilly-Fuissé as well as a thermos of coffee. If Mrs Doggett puts it in the fridge as soon as we arrive it should be drinkable before we leave."

Rodney Maybrick's glance was fixed on the road. "Father has never liked white wine, except for champagne."

"I dare say not, but I thought champagne was going a bit far. Mrs Doggett would hardly like champagne corks popping all over Meadowsweet Croft. It's upsetting for the other residents."

Her brother could have pointed out that for a mild, three-person celebration it was necessary for only one cork to pop, and that this was hardly likely to provoke a Bacchanalia among the elderly residents of Meadowsweet Croft. He was, however, not disposed to argue. On the subject of their father the two were as one. Their alliance, offensive and defensive, against that difficult old man, had for more than 20 years given an appearance of sibling amity which, without this common and reconciling irritant, it would have been difficult for them to sustain. He said: "This was a particularly awkward day for me to get away. I had to rearrange a number of appointments at

smoked salmon, tongue, cold chicken, with fruit salad and cream to follow. Enumerating these delights she said: "I only hope he appreciates it."

"Since he has shown no sign of appreciating either of us for the last 40 years he is hardly likely to begin now, even under the stimulus of a bottle of Pouilly-Fuissé and the heady excitement of his 80th birthday."

"I suppose he would argue that he passed over to us Uncle Mortimer's three million and that was appreciation enough. He'd probably say that he'd been generous."

Rodney said: "That wasn't generosity: merely an extremely sensible and legal device for avoiding capital transfer tax at death. It was family money anyway. Incidentally, he made the gift seven years ago today. He can die tomorrow and it will all be tax-free."

Both reflected that this was, indeed, a birthday worth celebrating. But Mildred reverted to a perennial grievance.

"He has no intention of dying, and I don't blame him. He can live another 20 years for all I care. I only wish he'd drop this obsession about moving to Maitland Lodge. He's perfectly well looked after at Meadowsweet Croft. The home is extremely well run and Mrs Doggett is a most capable and experienced woman. The local authority has a very good reputation for its geriatric services. He's lucky to be there."

Her brother changed gear and turned carefully into the suburban road leading to the home.

"Well, if he thinks we're going to find £35,000 a year between us to pay for a place at Maitland Lodge, it's time he faced reality. The idea is ludicrous."

They had had this conversation many times before. Mildred said: "It's only because that dreadful old Brigadier is there and keeps visiting Father and telling him how wonderful the place is. I think he even took Father to spend a day there. And it's not even as if they're old friends. Father only met him on the golf course. The Brigadier is a bad influence on Father in every way. I don't know why they let him out of Maitland Lodge. He seems to be able to hire cars and travel the whole country at will. If he's so old and frail that he needs to be in a home they should see that he stays there."

Both Rodney and Mildred had every intention of seeing that their father, Augustus, stayed in Meadowsweet

Short story by P. D. James

considerable inconvenience to important patients."

Rodney Maybrick was a consultant dermatologist with a large and highly lucrative practice which caused him little inconvenience. His patients rarely called him out at night, never died on him and, since they were as difficult to cure as they were to kill, he had them for life. Mildred could have pointed out that the day was not a particularly convenient one for her either. It had meant missing a meeting of the finance and general purposes committee of the district council, who could hardly be expected to arrive at sensible decisions without her. In addition it was she who had had the trouble of preparing the picnic.

Mrs Doggett, the warden of Meadowsweet Croft, had telephoned to say that a tea-party for the residents had been arranged for four o'clock, complete with a birthday cake, and it was to avoid this gruesome celebration that Mildred had said firmly that they could be there for luncheon only and would bring a picnic to be eaten either in their father's room or in the garden. Since she, too, would be sharing it she had taken some trouble. The picnic basket contained salads,

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Croft. Although 80, he was not particularly frail, but a total inability to cook for himself or, indeed, do anything which he regarded as women's work, coupled with an acerbic tongue which had driven away a succession of housekeepers except those who had been alcoholic, mad or kleptomaniac, had made residential care inevitable. It had taken his children considerable time and trouble to persuade him into Meadowsweet Croft. The relief for them, if not for him, had been considerable. They told him on their infrequent visits that he was a very fortunate old man. He even had a room to himself where he was able to display the results of his life-long hobby, a collection of ships in bottles.

Meadowsweet Croft was nowhere near a meadow, nor was it a croft and it could have been described as "sweet" only by a visitor partial to the smell of lemon-scented furniture polish. It was, however, very well run, almost aggressively clean and the diet so carefully balanced in accordance with modern theories about the feeding of the elderly that it would have been perverse to expect it also to be palatable. Mrs Doggett was an SRN but preferred not to use the title or wear her uniform since, after all, Meadowsweet Croft was not meant to be a nursing-home and her old dears should not be allowed to think of themselves as invalids. She encouraged exercise, positive thinking and meaningful activity and was occasionally a little discouraged to realise that all the activity her residents wanted was to watch television in the lounge with their chair-backs placed firmly against the wall as if to guard against the possibility of anyone creeping up on them during the more enthralling moments of *Bergerac* or *Blind Date*. They had had a lifetime of exercise, positive thinking and meaningful activity.

It has to be said that Mrs Doggett and the residents in general got on very well together with the exception of one central misunderstanding. She took the view that the old people had not come to Meadowsweet Croft in order to live a life of self-indulgent idleness, and the old people thought that they had. But they recognised that there were worse places than this home—the grave for one—and when Mrs Doggett proclaimed, as she frequently did, that she loved her old dears, really loved them, she spoke no more than the truth. In order to love them the more effectively she made sure that they were never out of her sight.

This constant surveillance was helped by the architecture of the home. It was a single-storey, U-shaped building round a courtyard with a central lawn, a single tree which obstinately refused to thrive,

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL BUTCHER



and four precisely-arranged flower-beds which were planted with bulbs in the spring, geraniums in the summer and dahlias in the autumn. The courtyard was furnished with solid wooden benches so that the residents could in summer take the sun. Each bore a plaque with the name of the person it commemorated, a *memento mori* which might have distressed users less tough than Mrs Doggett's old dears. They had, after all, survived 65 years or more of the 20th century.

It is not easy to manage a satisfactory picnic sitting in line on a hard bench with no table. Mildred had thoughtfully provided large paper napkins and they sat in a row with these on their laps while she passed plates of salmon and tongue and distributed lettuce leaves and tomatoes. The other benches were unoccupied—the residents had no great love of fresh air—but the picnickers were watched by interested eyes while, across the courtyard, Mrs Doggett occasionally waved an encouraging hand from her office window. Augustus Maybrick ate heartily but in silence. Conversation was perfunctory until the fruit salad was finished when, as his children expected, he embarked on his old grievance.

They listened in silence, then Rodney Maybrick said: "I'm sorry Father, but the idea is impossible. Maitland Lodge costs £35,000 a year and the fees will almost certainly rise. It would be an insupportable drain on our capital."

"The capital which you wouldn't

have had if it weren't for me."

"You passed over to Mildred and me the greater part of Uncle Mortimer's legacy and naturally we're grateful. We can assure you that the money hasn't been wasted. You wouldn't have made over the capital if you hadn't had confidence in our financial probity and acumen."

"I didn't see why the bloody government should get it."

"Precisely."

"But now I don't see why I shouldn't have a bit of comfort in my old age."

"Father, you're perfectly comfortable here. This garden really is delightful."

"This garden is Hell."

Rodney said: "In leaving the capital to you, I'm sure Uncle Mortimer thought of it as family money to be properly invested and left in turn to your children and grandchildren."

"Mortimer never intended anything of the sort. That last Christmas, when we were all together at Pentlands, the Christmas he died, he told me that he was proposing to send for his solicitor as soon as the office opened after the holiday, and to change his will."

Rodney said: "A passing fancy. Old people get them. It's as well that he never got the chance."

His father said: "No. I saw to that. That's why I murdered him."

Mildred felt that the only possible response to this statement was, "What on earth are you saying, Father?" It was, however, a question which it was hardly logical to ask. Her father's voice had been embarrassingly loud and clear. While she was searching for a reasonable response, her brother said calmly: "That's absolutely ridiculous, Father. Murdered him? How did you murder him?"

"With arsenic."

Mildred had found her voice. She said: "Uncle Mortimer died of a bad heart and viral pneumonia, complicated by gastro-enteritis."

"Complicated by arsenic."

"Where did you get arsenic, Father?" Rodney's voice was studiously calm. Unlike his sister, who was perched rigidly upright on the edge of her seat, he stretched back in as relaxed a pose as the hardness of the bench permitted, like a man who is prepared to waste a little time indulging his father's senile fantasy.

"I got it from Smallbone, your uncle's gardener. He used to say there was nothing like arsenic for dealing with dandelions. When Mortimer found out he pronounced that the stuff was too dangerous to have about the place and made Smallbone destroy it. But Smallbone kept a small quantity of the arsenic for himself in one of those old-fashioned blue poison bottles. He told me that

having it gave him a feeling of power. I can understand that. Knowing his opinion of his employer I'm only surprised that he didn't use it on Mortimer before I did. I knew where he'd hidden it in the garden shed, so when he died I hid it even more securely. It gave me a sense of power, too. Smallbone always said that arsenic didn't deteriorate with age, and he was certainly right there."

Rodney said sarcastically: "And I suppose you administered it to Uncle in his medicine and, despite its well-known appalling taste, he drank it down immediately."

His father did not at once reply. His sideways glance at his children was one of reluctant cunning mixed with a certain self-satisfaction. He said: "I suppose I'd better tell you the whole of it now that I've begun."

Rodney said repressively: "You certainly had. It's a complete fabrication, of course, but we may as well hear the whole story now you've embarked on it."

"You remember that one-pound box of soft-centred Belgian chocolates that you brought your uncle for Christmas? I may as well say that he regarded it as a deplorably inadequate present. That may have been one of the reasons which led to his decision to change the will."

Mildred said: "Uncle Mortimer was addicted to soft-centred chocolates and they were the most expensive we could buy."

"Oh, I know that. You both spoke about the cost so frequently and so openly that I've no doubt his nurse, Mrs Jennings, who is still alive, incidentally, will remember the gift. The arsenic I had was in the form of a white powder. I removed the base of the peppermint chocolate with a small, sharp knife and replaced the peppermint cream with arsenic. I can't pretend the method was original but it was certainly effective."

His son said: "A fiddling job, surely. It can't have been easy without fear of subsequent detection."

"It was a comparatively simple task for someone who has succeeded in building the *Cutty Sark* in a gin bottle. But your uncle wasn't after all going to examine the chocolate closely. I propped him up in bed and popped it into his mouth. He took one bite and swallowed it."

"Without complaining about the taste?"

"Oh, he complained about the taste, but I immediately popped in a raspberry cream and washed it down with a stiff dose of gin. He wasn't entirely *compos mentis* at the time. It was easy to convince him that he'd been mistaken about the bitterness of the first bite."

"And what did you do with the bottle of arsenic?"



There was a second pause, a second look of sly cunning. Then their father said: "I hid it in the blasted oak."

No explanation was necessary. Both his children knew precisely what he meant. The large oak tree on the outskirts of the grounds of Pentlands had been their tree in childhood as it had been their father's. It had been struck by lightning in a notable storm in the early 1900s but still stood, the boughs providing a wonderful climbing-frame, its split trunk a hiding-place large enough to conceal a small child.

Rodney Maybrick said: "All this is, of course, a fantasy, but I advise you to say nothing about it to anyone else. It may be amusing to you, and no doubt you take pleasure in its ingenuity, but other people may take a different view."

Mildred had been thinking. Suddenly she said: "I don't believe Uncle Mortimer seriously intended for a moment to alter his will. Why should he?"

"He disliked the thought of his money eventually coming to either of you. You, Rodney, had particularly displeased him. You insulted the woman to whom he was deeply, indeed passionately, devoted."

"What woman? I never even knew Aunt Maud."

"Not Aunt Maud, Mrs Thatcher. You said you would rather dive into a tank of piranha fish than be a member of her Cabinet."

"It was spoken in jest."

"A jest in very poor taste. Your perverted sense of humour could have lost our side of the family a considerable fortune if I hadn't remembered the arsenic."

Mildred said: "But what about me? What am I supposed to have done?"

"With you it was more a question of being rather than doing. Greedy, selfish, tactless and self-opinionated were some of the words he used. He said that God had given you a moustache to mark his regret at having made you a woman. Other remarks, which I'll spare you, were frankly uncomplimentary."

Mildred was surprisingly unperturbed by this diatribe. She said: "That proves it. Obviously he was deranged. But if Uncle Mortimer meant to change his will, did he tell you to whom he proposed to leave the money? He had a great family sense for all his faults. I really can't see him leaving it out of the family."

"Oh, he proposed to leave it in the family all right. It was all to go to the Australian cousins."

Mildred was outraged. "But he hadn't seen them for 40 years! And they didn't need it. They've got millions of sheep."

"Perhaps he thought they could do with a few million more."

Rodney's voice was quietly ominous. "Why are you telling us all this, Father?"

"Because my conscience is troubling me. I'm an old man now, coming to the end of my earthly journey. I feel I need to confess, to make my peace with the world and my Maker. You two have been for seven years in possession of money to which neither of you has any right. I had no right to inherit the three million in the first place and certainly no right to pass it on. These things weigh on an old man's mind. The air, indeed the whole atmosphere, of Meadowsweet Croft is conducive, I find, to feelings of guilt and remorse. Take the Sunday visits of the Reverend Hinkley when he and the members of his Women's Bright Hour sing hymns for us round the piano in the lounge. Then Mrs Doggett insists on turning on Radio Four very loudly every morning for *Thought for the Day*. And, of course, we have the children from the local comprehensive school who come to sing carols for us at Christmas, and the local church magazine brought round to us every month by the vicar's wife, always with a little encouraging homily. All these things have their effect. And then there's the food here, the unutterable boredom of the other residents, Mrs Doggett's voice and incipient halitosis, and the hardness of the beds—constant, if petty, reminders of that Hell which is supposed to await the unrepentant sinner. Not that I totally believe in eternal punishment, of course, but being

required to live at Meadowsweet Croft does dispose to a certain morbidity of mind."

There was a long silence. Then Rodney said: "This, of course, is blackmail, and blackmail of a particularly inept kind. No one will believe you. The story will be taken as the ravings of an old man well advanced in senility."

"Ah, but they can see I'm not, can't they?"

Rodney went on: "And who do you expect to believe you?"

"The Australian cousins may well. I feel particularly guilty about your Australian cousins. But it won't matter whether they do or not. There will certainly be in everyone's mind a very large element of doubt. As I said, it was a pity you made such a big thing of buying your uncle those chocolates. And then there's the fact that I passed the money over to you. That might look very like blackmail. I must say I don't think the district council will like the story, Mildred. And as far as you're concerned, Rodney, I've a feeling that your most lucrative patients will be taking their acne elsewhere."

The silence this time was both long and profound. Then Rodney said: "We'll think it over. We'll let you know our decision the day after tomorrow. In the mean time, do or say nothing. Do you understand me, Father? Nothing."

The conversation had been so upsetting to Rodney and Mildred that they left Meadowsweet Croft without having retrieved the Pouilly-Fuissé from the refrigerator. Mrs Doggett felt justified in confiscating it for a raffle prize at the summer fund-raising fête of the League of Friends. Mr Maybrick never got his celebration drink, but he was consoled in his disappointment less by his aversion to white wine than by the knowledge that his children's birthday visit had really gone better than he could have hoped.

As soon as they had thrown off the suburbs of the town and were on a quiet country road, Rodney drove the car onto the verge and turned off the engine. There were decisions to be made to which both of them felt they could hardly give adequate thought in a moving vehicle.

After a few minutes Mildred said: "The whole thing is ridiculous, of course. The brothers never liked each other, but I don't think Father would go as far as murder. Still, it's just as well that Uncle was cremated. The doctor, apparently, never had the least suspicion."

"Doctors who make a practice of suspecting their middle-class acquaintances of murdering their relatives usually end up without any patients. Uncle Mortimer was dying in any case. If Father



did murder him"—Rodney had some difficulty in getting out the word—"a confession can't bring him back."

Brother and sister took some comfort from the undeniable fact that nothing could bring Uncle back. Then Mildred spoke what was in both their minds.

"It would be only a couple of miles out of our way to go to Pentlands. If Father did throw the bottle into the oak it's probably still there. Without the evidence no one will take his story seriously. There's no point in putting it off. Now is as good a time as any."

Rodney said: "Who was it who bought Pentlands? Do you remember? I only know that the executors sold it below its worth."

"I think they were called Swingleton, an elderly couple without children. They're hardly likely to go climbing oak trees."

"I doubt that we'll find it easy now. I'm certainly too large to get into the trunk. If the bottle is there we'll have to hook it up."

"How are we going to do that?"

"I've got my walking-stick in the boot of the car."

Mildred said: "Of course, we may have trouble in actually finding it. Even on a bright May day like this it will be very dark inside the trunk."

Rodney spoke with some satisfaction: "I never drive without a torch. We can use that. The problem may be getting into the grounds. If the gate is locked

we'll have to get over the wall. Well, we've done that often enough in our time."

Unfortunately the gate *was* locked. Although the stone wall was not more than 5 feet high they had considerable difficulty in getting over and managed it in the end only with the help of a folding picnic chair from the back of the car. There was also the problem of passing motorists. Twice they had to desist at the sound of an approaching car, pick up the chair and peer in the grass verge as if searching for rare plants. Rodney, in particular, found it difficult to hoist up his sister while keeping his eyes and ears open, and Mildred's tight skirt was an embarrassing hindrance. There is something peculiarly unedifying about the sight of a stout lady of 45 stuck on the top of a wall with her legs waving, her skirt ruffled up to expose an undignified expanse of white knickers. He trembled to think what Sir Fortescue Lackland, his most distinguished patient, would think if he could see them now, and was fortified to continue with the expedition only by the thought of what Sir Fortescue would think if Father ever carried out his threat and confessed.

Eventually, however, they were over and, folding up the chair and picking up the walking-stick, crept along the inner side of the wall towards the blasted oak. With the help of the chair Rodney had no problem in reaching the necessary height and in peering down into the dark depths of the trunk. Mildred handed up the torch and he shone it down, illuminating the bed of shrivelled leaves, dried acorns, small twigs, broken pieces of bark and a twisted white plastic bag. And beside the bag he could see something a great deal more interesting: a small dark-blue bottle with ridged sides.

Mildred called out quietly: "Is it there? Is it there?"

"Yes, it's here."

But discovering the bottle was a great deal easier than retrieving it. Rodney found it impossible to manoeuvre the walking-stick and at the same time hold the heavy torch, so both of them had to mount the chair, which creaked under their weight and, indeed, seemed in danger of collapsing. That catastrophe was averted when Mildred hooked her left arm round one of the lower boughs, thus releasing some of the weight. She shone the torch steadily into the trunk of the oak while her brother reached down with the stick. His plan was gently to edge the bottle to the side of the trunk, then hook it up. At first, to their horror, they were in danger of losing sight of it when it sank among the soft detritus of dried leaves. At the second try it became entangled with the white plastic bag. But at last



Rodney managed to edge it towards the side and began the slow, careful, upward lift. Twice it got within reach of his left hand but twice it fell. But on the third attempt, not daring to speak in case even his breath dislodged it, he raised the bottle within reach of his stretched fingers and was able to grasp it. Then, with relief, he jumped down from the chair and gave a hand to his sister.

"And what do you think you're doing?"

The voice, which literally caused them both to jump like startled cats and set their hearts pounding, was calm, authoritative, dismaying upper-class. They turned round and saw two young men in tweed caps and jackets. Mildred's first thought was that they were gamekeepers, but almost immediately she rejected this idea. The grounds of Pentlands were extensive, amounting to two or three acres, but hardly suitable for the rearing of game, and the young men looked and spoke more like sons of the house than servants. One of them was actually carrying a gun. It was a moment of complete horror.

Her brother had been rendered speechless with shock and embarrassment but Mildred recovered herself with admirable speed. With an attempt at charm she said: "I'm afraid you've caught us trespassing. We would have called at the front door and asked permission, but the gate was locked. My brother and I merely wanted to visit our uncle's old family home. We used to play here frequently as children during the holidays and this old tree is a part of our childhood memories. We were driving past and couldn't resist the temptation to visit it."

The taller young man said coolly: "Equipped with walking-stick and chair. What precisely were you looking for?"

He shot out his hand and took the bottle. Rodney said: "We saw it lying there and were a little curious. It's nothing to do with us, of course."

"In that case, we'd better take charge of it. It looks like poison to me. We'll see it's safely locked up." He turned to his companion. "Henry, do you think it's necessary to phone the police?"

Henry was nonchalant. "Oh, I don't think so. They look comparatively harmless. Almost respectable, indeed, although, of course, you can't tell from appearances. But we'd certainly better take charge of the bottle. And we'll take their names and addresses."

Rodney said promptly: "John Smith and Mary Smith. High Street, Tooting Bec."

The younger man smiled grimly. "Your real names and addresses, I think.

Perhaps you have your driving-licence on you. We need some means of identification."

The procedure of name-taking took place in an embarrassed silence. Afterwards the Maybricks were escorted to the gate, which was locked after them. Dishevelled, dirty and scarlet with shame, they looked like a modern Adam and Eve summarily ejected from Paradise. Neither spoke until they were again seated in the car and Rodney had turned on the engine. Then Mildred said: "If Father confesses now and it gets into the papers, those two men are bound to come forward. And they've got the evidence."

Rodney wished that his sister was less liable to state the obvious. Since there was nothing helpful to be said, he said nothing. He was grateful only that Mildred was apparently too dispirited to assail him for his folly in giving a false name. After a short pause, Mildred spoke again.

"Shall you get in touch with Maitland Lodge or shall I?"

In a well-regulated and moral universe Mr Maybrick would no doubt have found Maitland Lodge a sad disappointment, the food indigestible, the wine undrinkable, the staff draconian, his fellow-residents uncongenial and the Brigadier a far less agreeable companion under the same roof than he was as an occasional visitor to Meadowsweet Croft. Regrettably for the triumph of virtue over wickedness, Maitland Lodge more than lived up to Mr Maybrick's hopes and expectations. He and the Brigadier agreed that they could certainly aim to live there for the next 10 years before wondering whether it was time to shuffle off this mortal coil. Mr Maybrick was a great favourite with the staff who regarded him as a "real character", particularly when he was at his most acerbic. He was especially matey with the buxom Nurse Bunting, who occasionally ministered to the residents' aches and pains. When wearing her impeccably starched blue and white uniform and goffered cap Nurse Bunting was a model of professional rectitude. After duty hours, however, she would literally let down her hair and she and Mr Maybrick enjoyed many cosy sessions in his room over his nightcap of hot whisky.

"You are awful about your family, Gussie," she occasionally protested. "No visits allowed, no letters, not even a box of chocolates."

"Particularly not a box of chocolates," said Mr Maybrick.

One evening in late August, three months after his admission and at the end of a perfect summer day, he and the Brigadier were sitting in their comfortable, cushioned wicker chairs on the terrace

looking out over the beautiful gardens of Maitland Lodge to the distant shimmer of the river. Badge, the butler, had just brought out their pre-dinner drinks and both were at peace with the world. The talk reverted, as it often did, to the circumstances under which this happy resolution had been achieved. The Brigadier said: "I'm still surprised that your children actually swallowed your story."

"I'm not. People are always ready to believe that others will act as they might have acted themselves. I had no doubt, too, they would call at Pentlands. What was more natural? Your men must have been very convincing though. Put the fear of God into them. Wish I'd been there to see it."

"Well," said the Brigadier easily, "that's the advantage of being a soldier. You can always find a couple of good chaps when you want a job done."

"What was it they put in the bottle?"

"You know what it was. Bicarbonate of soda."

There was a silence while the Brigadier sipped his gin and tonic and Mr Maybrick savoured his dry sherry. It was served at precisely the temperature he liked. He was pondering whether to try one of the delectable nuts or canapés on the drinks tray or whether that would spoil his appetite for dinner when the Brigadier said: "Question I've always wanted to ask you. Not sure whether I should. Some questions shouldn't be asked among friends. Still, a natural curiosity, don't you know. I just wondered—don't answer if you don't want to—whether you did help your brother on his way."

"Whether I murdered him?"

"Not to put too fine a point on it, yes. Not with arsenic, of course. Only a cad would use arsenic. That's the weapon of suburban poisoners and Victorian adulteresses. Still, there are other ways, presumably."

Mr Maybrick appeared to consider the matter. "Well, if I had done it I'd have used something quite simple. A plastic bag, for example. You just slip it over the head when the patient is sleeping, press it down firmly over the nose and mouth and he goes out as gently as a sleeping child. I don't see how anybody could detect that."

The Brigadier said: "You'd have to dispose of the bag, though. Not easy to burn, plastic. What would you do about the bag?"

"Oh," said Mr Maybrick, taking a further sip of his sherry, "I think I'd just throw it into the trunk of the blasted oak. Pass over the paper will you, Brigadier. What was it you said you fancied for tomorrow's 2.30?"

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AFTER THE FEAST

Boxing Day dawns, and the shelves of the refrigerator are laden with plates of left-overs. Anton Mosimann peels off the foil wrap and suggests simple ways to make new dishes, ensuring that the cook, too, has a relaxing holiday.

CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP: GRATIN
OF CHRISTMAS
PUDDING, STIR-FRY
OF TURKEY IN
LETTUCE LEAVES,
AND PASTA IN
BLUE CHEESE SAUCE.

Photographs by
Roger Stowell.

The holiday period spanning Christmas and the new year should be relaxed and celebratory. But often it is almost dreaded by those of us who have to plan, shop and buy gifts, as well as cook. And as for the notorious tendency to over-buy, I can sympathise wholeheartedly: Christmas is a time when people get together more than usual, and no one wants to run out of provisions.

Obviously forethought is required if the holiday is not to be spoilt by an excessive workload in the kitchen. Home-made pudding and cake can be prepared at least a month before the holiday. Essentials for the Christmas Day meal itself—the turkey, goose or ham—need to be ordered in advance and their cooking and accompaniments well planned. However, little more than a creative adaptation of your normal shopping-list will ensure leisurely days thereafter. Sensible buying of store-cupboard basics, with the addition of a few luxury items—festive treats—will solve many

of the holiday problems, whether you are catering for day-to-day eating or coping with surprise visitors.

I offer a few suggestions on what you might serve on Boxing Day. You will doubtless have some left-over poultry or ham: this can most simply be served cold with salad vegetables and an interesting chutney. I particularly like accompanying cold meats with roasted, skinned and sliced peppers (green, red and yellow), marinated with just a touch of good oil. Alternatively, those same peppers could be puréed to make a sauce for the cold meats or for a hot pasta. Left-over meat can also be included in a creamy risotto, a hash, a fritter or stir-fry, or baked in or on pastry (filo is a good standby and stores well in the freezer).

Left-over Christmas pudding can be transformed into a delicious gratin dessert. Crumbled, either pudding or cake can be mixed with double cream or yoghurt and frozen to make a very acceptable ice-cream. Other ideas involve simply having in reserve some seasonal and exotic fruit, which keep well and

mingle fragrantly in a fresh-fruit salad for dessert or breakfast. Mixed dried fruit can be cooked in a light sugar syrup for a quick and healthy compote, again good for breakfast or dessert.

Even left-over cheese can be pressed into Boxing Day service. Any blue cheese—Stilton is traditional at this time—can be made into a sauce for pasta, a dressing for a sturdy leafsalad, or a dip for crudités.

If unexpected guests call, those pre-bought luxuries, such as smoked salmon or olives, can quickly be made into canapés. Bases can be biscuits, dark rye or pumpernickel breads, or *croustades* (thin slices of bread brushed with olive oil and baked until crisp). The olives will purée to make a *tapenade* topping (also good on miniature pizzas and as a dip); tiny shreds of smoked salmon can flavour and garnish cold scrambled-egg *croustades*. This combination, when made with hot eggs, creates a most wonderful celebratory breakfast.

May your Christmas be merry and your Boxing Day truly relaxed!



A SLICE OF TURKEY AND HAM HASH BESIDE A DISH OF CANAPÉS MADE WITH AN OLIVE-BASED TAPÉNADE.



ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS PICTURE LIBRARY

STIR-FRIED TURKEY IN LETTUCE LEAVES

This starter is Chinese in inspiration. Guests make a parcel of the stir-fry in the lettuce leaves and eat it with their fingers.

2 tbsp sesame oil
4oz/100g green and red peppers, seeded and diced
bunch of spring onions, trimmed and sliced
8oz/225g cooked turkey, skinned and diced
4oz/100g Brussels sprouts, shredded
4oz/100g potatoes, peeled, cooked and diced
2 tbsp soy sauce
salt and freshly ground black pepper
8 lettuce leaves, iceberg or Little Gem
1 tbsp sesame seeds

Heat the oil in a large frying-pan or wok. Add the peppers and stir-fry for a minute or two; then add the spring onions. Mix in the turkey, Brussels sprouts, potato dice and soy sauce. Stir-fry until heated through. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange two lettuce leaves on each plate, and divide the stir-fry equally between the leaves. Before serving, sprinkle each filled leaf with sesame seeds.

Serves four.

After a busy time in the kitchen, the culmination of weeks of careful planning, the cook gets a well-earned rest and relaxes with family and friends.

Warm the milk through in a large pan. Melt the butter in a separate, thick-bottomed pan, then add the flour and mix in well. Cook for a few minutes over a gentle heat without colouring. Gradually add the warmed milk and stir until smooth. Allow to simmer for approximately 10 minutes.

Add the cheese, stir it in until melted and then remove the pan from the heat. Mix in the egg yolk, then strain the sauce and season to taste with salt and cayenne pepper. Fold in the cream and serve poured over the chosen pasta.

Makes about 18fl oz/500ml.

TURKEY AND HAM HASH

Hash is an American dish, traditionally made with corned beef, which is fried on both sides until it is brown. You could also add some chopped green vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, to this Christmas hash.

4 tbsp good vegetable oil
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 red pepper, seeded and chopped
18oz/500g potatoes, peeled, cooked and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch/1cm dice (left-over roast potatoes could be used)
18oz/500g cooked turkey, shredded
18oz/500g ham, shredded
2 tbsp freshly chopped parsley
7fl oz/200ml *fromage frais* (optional)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat half the oil in a large frying-pan and sweat the onion and pepper until soft. Allow to cool a little.

Mix the onion, pepper, potato dice and shredded meats in a bowl with the parsley and *fromage frais* (if using). Season to taste and mix well. Heat the remaining oil in the frying-pan and add the hash mixture. Cook over a medium heat for about 20-25 minutes until nicely brown, turning once (use an inverted plate to help you turn the hash). Occasionally press down with a spatula.

Drain off any excess fat, cut into wedges and serve in the American-style with a fried egg on top and ketchup or chilli sauce on the side.

Serves four.

TAPÉNADE

This versatile mixture, which originates in the south of France, is very useful for making last-minute canapés.

9oz/250g oil-cured black olives, pitted
1 garlic clove, peeled
1½ tbsp drained capers
2oz/50g anchovy fillets, drained
4 tbsp olive oil
juice of 1 lemon

Combine all the ingredients in a blender or food-processor and mix until a smooth paste is obtained. Store in the refrigerator. Serve as a topping or as a dip.

Makes about 12oz/350g.

GRATIN OF CHRISTMAS PUDDING

This way of using up left-over Christmas pudding makes a dessert that is surprisingly light and full of flavour.

18oz/500g cooked Christmas pudding
14fl oz/400ml Quark or *fromage frais*
1 egg yolk
powdered cinnamon, caster sugar and lemon juice to taste

First, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.

Crumble the Christmas pudding with a fork, then place in a shallow, ovenproof dish.

Mix the Quark and egg yolk, and add cinnamon, sugar and lemon juice to taste. Pour over the Christmas pudding and glaze in the preheated oven for 5-6 minutes only. Serve it lukewarm, not hot.

Serves four.

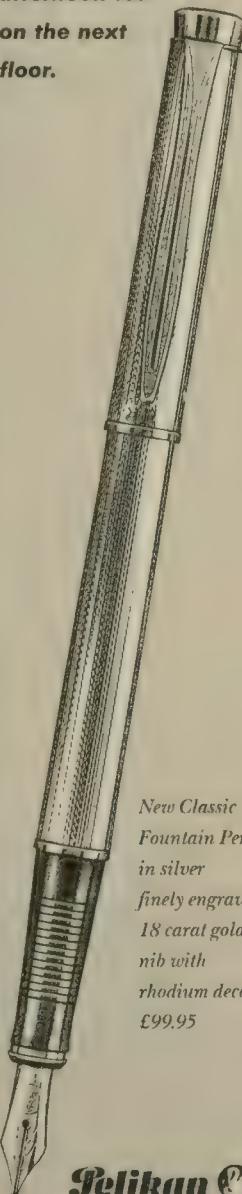
BLUE CHEESE SAUCE

This is delicious served with pasta or gnocchi. Use Stilton, Roquefort or Gorgonzola.

18fl oz/500ml milk
2oz/50g butter
2oz/50g plain flour
2oz/50g blue cheese, grated
1 egg yolk
salt and cayenne pepper
2 tbsp whipping cream, beaten

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IN SEARCH OF CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

*AVOID THE STRESSES OF CHRISTMAS BY FOLLOWING
SOME OF SARAH FOSTER'S SEASONAL IDEAS*



The Four Seasons Inn on the Park has joined forces with Harvey Nichols to offer guests personal shopping consultations, either in the store's special suite or in the hotel itself. This scheme runs throughout the year, so real shopaholics can return for the January sales.

You might like to combine your shopping with a visit to the theatre and a party for some friends. The Terrace Garden restaurant at Le Meridien, Piccadilly, has three festive set menus starting at £20.50 a head. The hotel, in conjunction with the Royal Opera House, is also offering a VIP package that includes accommodation, the best seats in the house, a programme and champagne, post-performance dinner in the Terrace Garden restaurant and full English breakfast. Prices vary according to the production but start at £165 for a programme of ballet.

For those who prefer boutiques to the Knightsbridge stores, Chelsea makes an excellent base. If you are looking for something really special, Bonhams Chelsea Galleries, in Lots Road, is holding a sale of vintage champagne on December 1 at 6pm, and all its December sales will include potential Christmas gifts. Around the corner is the modern and luxurious Conrad Hotel, overlooking Chelsea Harbour. Last-minute shoppers could reward themselves by stopping there for Christmas, which will be celebrated in traditional style, right

down to the Christmas stockings provided for guests.

You might enjoy crossing the Channel to buy the ingredients for the family dinner. Calais, so easy to reach by high-speed catamaran or ferry, boasts a wealth of food shops—not only the enormous supermarkets but also wonderful vintners, cheese shops and charcuteries.

If you plan your visit for the

weekend of December 19-20, an unusual spectacle will be taking place some 15 miles south-east of Calais, in the village of Licques. The Knights of the Brotherhood of Licques Turkey Federation parade through the streets dressed in 17th-century costume, driving the turkeys before them.

Half an hour's drive from Calais lies the Château de Cocove, a hotel with the useful addition of a wine-shop in the cellar. The price of £68 per person is based on two people with a car staying in a double or twin-bedded room and includes one night's bed and breakfast as well as the Hover-speed crossing.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROWAN BARNES MURPHY

Christmas is in full and tinselled swing down the high streets of the nation as early as November. Small wonder that by December 24 the taste of mince pies starts to cloy. Somewhere in that long run-up the atmosphere is dissipated. Exhausted Christmas spirits can be restored by doing something different, or by going somewhere new. Here are a few suggestions.

SHOPPING AROUND

Few can escape Christmas shopping but unless you have time to enjoy it, it can become a chore. Instead, turn it into an event. Decide where you would like to indulge in a shopping spree and organise a short break around it. London will probably be the first choice, because of the number and variety of its shops. You can avoid trailing around town with a growing load of gifts by booking into a hotel and having your purchases delivered to you there.

THE FEATHERS
FLY AT LICQUES
IN FRANCE.

I n the Reading

**Room at the British
Museum are ghosts
for those with eyes
to see them.**

**Virginia Woolf
whispering, 'Lynton,
I've brought you
one of Duncan's
art deco cushions to
sit on, and another
bottle of ink**



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from Leonard about
the Springs of Helicon.
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to Gordon Square
and stop Maynard
publishing his Tract
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The more adventurous might prefer a grand tour of Italy's stylish shops: Italia tour is offering pre-Christmas, two-night city breaks to Rome for £179, to Florence for £174 and to Venice for £209, travelling on Alitalia scheduled flights. This offer runs from December 10 to 16 and your stay must include a Saturday night.



HOME FROM HOME

Self-catering holidays operate on the principle of a change being as good as a rest, and at least you can choose somewhere large enough for a full family reunion. English Country Cottages has 2,000 carefully chosen properties around the country, ranging from cottages and farmhouses to castles. Tuckenhay Mill, near Totnes, in Devon, has been converted into apartments and also comprises a number of cottages and even a swimming-pool and leisure complex, making it especially suitable for families with children.

Unusual buildings are the speciality of the Landmark Trust. Castles are just the beginning; you could stay in a lighthouse or an arsenic mine or a railway station. If you fancy a folly, the Trust has several lovely examples on its books. All are comfortably

For a real change and fresh air during the festive season, Tuckenhay Mill, in Devon, above, features self-catering cottage accommodation for families.

furnished and equipped with books and maps. None has a telephone or television: purgatory for some, paradise for others. *The Landmark Handbook*, necessary for bookings, costs £7.50.

HOT AND COLD

Goodwood Travel has crammed every moment of its one- and two-day Lapland tours with activities to create a Christmas to remember for a lifetime. Travel by Concorde to northern Finland, the land of the Snow Queen, meet Santa Claus and visit his village, ride in a reindeer-drawn sleigh and enjoy a banquet at your hotel. The day tour, with flights both ways on Concorde, on December 13, 20 or 25, costs £1,695 (£1,645 for children under 12). The two-day tour, departing December 12, 13, 19, 20, 24, 25, costs £1,295 (£1,223 for children under 12 sharing a room with two adults), with one flight on Concorde, the other by Boeing 737.

Traditional Christmases with hot sunshine are offered by Tropical Places. Caribbean holidays start at £915 for 10 nights in a self-catering studio apartment at Pirate's Inn, Barbados, flying with British Airways from Gatwick on Christmas Day.



THE LANDMARK TRUST

For a calm break away from telephones and the television, the Landmark Trust's unusual buildings include The Old Light, right, on Lundy, Devon.



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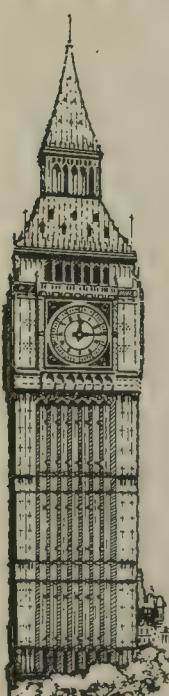
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COUNTRY CHRISTMASES

The tradition of the Christmas-night ghost story still survives at the 15th-century Spread Eagle Hotel, in Midhurst, Sussex. Fireside readings of mystery stories, in a hotel that has several resident ghosts, are one feature of the four-day extravaganza that begins with a champagne reception on Christmas Eve. All-inclusive rates start from £455 per person.

"Indulge your soul" is Adare Manor's motto. This Gothic-style mansion in County Limerick, Ireland, nestles in an 840-acre estate on the Maigue river. Facilities for golf, hunting and shooting are on the menu.

Londoners who prefer not to travel too far for a taste of the country will be delighted with the Donnington Valley Hotel, near Newbury, in Berkshire. It has been most comfortably and stylishly decorated, is surrounded by its own golf course and can offer riding and fly-fishing on the River Kennet, among other country pursuits (with expert and friendly tuition). For Christmas Day a festive lunch is being arranged, and on December 31 there is a ball with Charleston Chasers Roaring 20s orchestra and an eight-course dinner at £65 a head. If you are wise and want to stay the night an extra £40 a head will provide accommodation, a bottle of bubbly in your room and brunch next day. All-inclusive rates from Christmas Eve to Boxing Day are £295 per person.

Join Jacqueline and Martin Gilleland in their charming 14th-century home near Leominster, Herefordshire, and enjoy an intimate atmosphere. The Marsh Country Hotel has only six bedrooms yet, since it opened in 1988, it has received the highest praise. A three-night Christmas break costs £315 per person.

Historic House Hotels' three country properties all offer full Christmas programmes. A day at Wetherby races is part of the entertainment laid on for guests at Middlethorpe Hall, York; a treasure hunt is planned at Hartwell House, Aylesbury; while at Bodysgallen Hall, North Wales, you will be welcomed with carols and champagne.

Dryburgh Abbey Hotel, in the Scottish Borders, is that rare establishment, a country hotel with a Christmas programme for families with children. This includes a visit by Santa Claus, a chance to see the pantomime *Beauty and the Beast* in Edinburgh, archery tuition, a golf competition, computer games and a mountain-bike trail. It runs from

December 23 for five nights and prices start at £550 (£135 for children under 12 sharing their parents' room).

For a more distant break Lufthansa offers a traditional Christmas holiday in the little German town of Hersbruck, 20 miles east of Nuremberg, departing from Heathrow on December 21 and returning on December 27. Accommodation is in one of three traditional inns, and there are excursions to the Christmas Market in Nuremberg and other nearby attractions. The price of £448 for six nights in twin room includes breakfast and dinner.

The Spread Eagle Hotel, in Midhurst, West Sussex, below, offers chilling ghost stories told around a roaring fire. The hotel is reputed to be haunted.



ADVENT AND AFTER

National Trust properties around the country are hosting celebrations throughout December. Concerts predominate, but often with an unusual twist. Faint Carols of the Horn, at Dunham Massey, Cheshire, on December 19 and 20, is a mixed programme of music, puppetry and masquerade; Corpsecandle, at Moseley Old Hall, Staffordshire, from



WALK OFF THE PUDDING.

December 9 to 12, is Yuletide entertainment with a ghostly flavour. Leeds Castle, in Kent, is staging Christmas Kentish evenings including a five-course banquet, Morris dancers, carol singers and country dancing. On New Year's Day the now-traditional treasure trail will be a special attraction for families, as accompanied children under 16 are allowed in free.

Starting on Boxing Day, the National Trust and the Ramblers Association are organising a week of Christmas walks on National Trust land around the country, which continue until January 1.

Those with no energy left for walking can retreat to Seckford Hall, near Woodbridge, in Suffolk. This delightful family-owned hotel, dating from Tudor times, is closed on Christmas Day but is arranging a three-day recovery break from Boxing Day. Prices start at £185 per person.

New Year should also be a special time. If you have not received an invitation to a Hogmanay party (the Scots know

how to celebrate this festival), one striking alternative would be a trip to Moscow to see the Bolshoi Ballet and the Moscow State Circus in their home city. This fully escorted four-day tour, organised by Page & Moy with flights by British Airways, costs £635 and departs December 30.

□ Four Seasons Inn on the Park, 071-499 0888; Harvey Nichols, 071-259 6638; Le Meridien, 071-734 8000; Bonhams Chelsea Galleries, 071-351 7111; Conrad Hotel, 071-823 3000; Hover speed, 081-424 2929; Italtour, 071-383 3886; English Country Cottages, 0328 851155; Landmark Trust, 0628 825925; Goodwood Travel, 0227 763336; Tropical Places, 0342 825123; The Spread Eagle Hotel, 0730 816911; Adare Manor, 010 353 61 396566; Donnington Valley Hotel, 0635 551199; The Marsh, 0568 613952; Middlethorpe Hall, 0904 641241; Hartwell House, 0296 747444; Bodysgallen Hall, 0492 584466; Dryburgh Abbey, 0835 22261; DER (Hersbruck holiday), 071-408 0111; National Trust, 071-222 9251; Leeds Castle, 0622 765400; Seckford Hall, 0394 385678; Page & Moy, 0533 552521.

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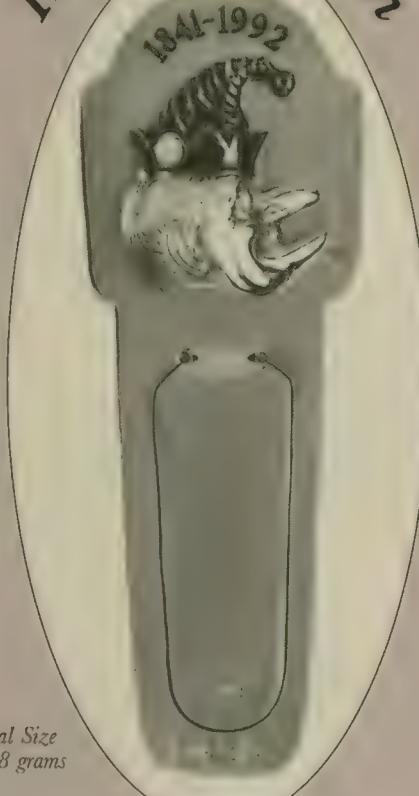
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THE GREAT COVER-UP

Jane Durbridge creates festive decorations by wrapping containers in natural materials.

Photographs by Linda Burgess



Floral decorations often place the emphasis on the arrangement, the container being selected merely for suitability. Jane Durbridge, of Parterre Flowers, has dramatically changed this focus and transforms the container itself into a decorative force. Covered in natural plant materials, exotic leaves, seed-heads, massed twigs or twisted vines, it now becomes a foil for arrangements of fresh flowers, plants, fruit, pot-pourri, piles of glass balls or arrays of decorative candles.

Whether everyday flower vases and bowls are used, or something as mundane as a plastic bucket, the secret is to effect a total disguise by wrapping them in luxuriant foliage or surrounding them with artfully positioned plant material.

The decoration can be simple or complex; sprayed with metallic paints for a festive glow or with varnish to give dried plant materials a rich, natural finish.

If ready-dried materials such as vine stems are a little stiff, a few minutes' steaming over a kettle will make them flexible enough to be wrapped around a container. Fresh, still-supple twigs or other semi-dry plant material, on the other hand, once wound in position, should be secured with wire and left for several days to dry fully before being sprayed with paint or varnish.

The examples shown use only natural materials, which can be ordered from most good florists; in cases where they may not be readily available, alternatives have been suggested, or the arranger's imagination can be given full rein.

Previous pages

GOLDEN PINK LEAF VASE
20 hoja de manzana leaves
1 bunch of thin vine stems (or any long, supple strands of flexible twigs or ivy)
can of clear spray varnish

Glue 10 hoja leaves around the top half of the container, overlapping them to fit and ensuring that the top edge of the container is hidden. Repeat on the lower half with the other 10 leaves, overlapping the first layer. Place the container on its side until the adhesive is dry, then trim base evenly. Wrap twisted vine stems around the middle and pull them tightly before securing the ends with wire. Spray all over with clear varnish.

We filled the container with Casablanca lilies.



FRUIT AND TISSUE-PAPER PLATTER

SILVER TWIG TUB

2 bunches of stripped birch twigs (or any straight twigs, or thin bamboo canes)
6 hoja de manzana leaves
6 lotus heads
cans of silver and gold spray paint

Glue each birch twig vertically to cover the whole container. Spray with silver paint and allow to dry. Glue leaves, evenly spaced, around the middle; when adhesive has set, fix the lotus heads to the centre of each leaf.

Spray leaves and heads with silver paint, then go over the whole container with a light spray of gold.

GOLDEN BIRCH NEST

5 bunches of tied birch twigs
6 bunches of vine stems
15 lotus heads
6 banksia leaves (or other large leaves cut into geometric shapes and dried flat)
can of gold or bronze spray paint

Glue evenly-spaced clusters of birch twigs vertically around the container, with tops of twigs about 2 inches (5cm) above the top edge, and allow to dry. Trim top edge of twigs and spray with gold paint. When dry, wrap vine stems around container, pull them tight and secure with wire (glue them if necessary). Wire lotus heads into loose groups of three, then space the five groups evenly around the container. Wire or glue into place. Fill any spaces with banksia leaves. Spray gold or bronze.

This looks dramatic filled with candles and surrounded with strings of fresh hops which bring a rich, country smell to the Christmas table. A cautionary note: do not leave unattended while the candles are burning.

SEA-SPONGE POT

7 hoja de manzana leaves
8 small sea-sponges (or coarse plastic sponge, roughly torn)
cans of gold and silver metallic spray paint

Cover the pot with overlapping leaves, gluing as you go. Allow to dry and then trim base evenly. Glue sponges around the base of the pot, spray everything silver then spray lightly with gold.

Fill with Christmas baubles or pot-pourri, or with gold candles as shown on previous pages.

FRUIT AND TISSUE-PAPER PLATTER

gold or red tissue-paper, cut in thin strips
mature eucalyptus leaves (or bay leaves)
jar of gilders' gold dust (or gold theatrical face make-up)
tube of pink glitter
selection of fruit (apples, oranges, pomegranates, figs)
selection of dried seed-heads (physalis, nigella, star anise)
cans of gold, silver or bronze spray paint

Spray leaves with gold or silver paint and use to line a large plate or dish. Spray the larger fruits gold, wrap them with gold or red tissue-paper, then dust them with gilders' gold dust and pink glitter (the figs are simply dusted with glitter). Dried seed-heads can be sprayed with metallic paint.

Cautionary note: do not eat any fruits or nuts that have been sprayed with paint or on which gilders' gold dust has been used, and keep such items out of the reach of young children.

This decoration, also shown above, was styled by photographer Linda Burgess.

Opposite page

GREEN LOTUS LEAF BOWL

5 lotus leaves
7 pomegranates, dried in a warm place for about 10 days to make them lighter
7 lotus heads
can of clear spray varnish

Glue overlapping leaves around container, extending approximately 2 inches (5cm) above the top. Lay on its side until dry, then trim base evenly. Carefully glue lotus heads and pomegranates

around the centre. When secure, spray with clear varnish.

Fill with sweet-smelling fruits and fresh hops.

RUSTIC VINE NEST

12 bunches of vine stems
3 bunches of liquorice sticks (or cinnamon sticks)
5 bunches of phlomis (or 1 large packet of silvery reindeer moss)
3 bunches of poppy heads (or small fir-cones)
can of clear spray varnish

Wrap all the vine stems tightly around a tall container until it is completely covered, then secure them with wire. Poke liquorice sticks among vine stems. Make groups of about five phlomis and three poppy heads and glue them into position around the sides. Finally, glue phlomis all around the top edge of the container. When glue is dry, spray whole arrangement with clear varnish.

This would make an ideal holder for sprays of rich, red, dried beech leaves, but for the festive table the rose Nicole, available through florists, is a good choice, not only for its seasonal name but also for its dazzling pink petals with their soft, pastel-shaded undersides.

MAGNOLIA FRUIT BOWL

20 dried magnolia leaves
4 metres of thin rope (or twisted raffia strands)
can of clear spray varnish

Glue the overlapping magnolia leaves around a shallow dish with vertical sides. Lay on side until dry, then trim any excess from base. Wrap rope around several times and knot it, then spray leaves and rope with clear varnish. If raffia is used, spray the leaves before tying the strands around them.

□ Basic materials

Stub/florists' wire.

Wire-cutters or florists' scissors.

A strong cold glue, like superglue. A hot glue gun from do-it-yourself shops makes the job easier, but care should be taken to avoid burns, and children should not be allowed to use it.

Metallic spray paints.

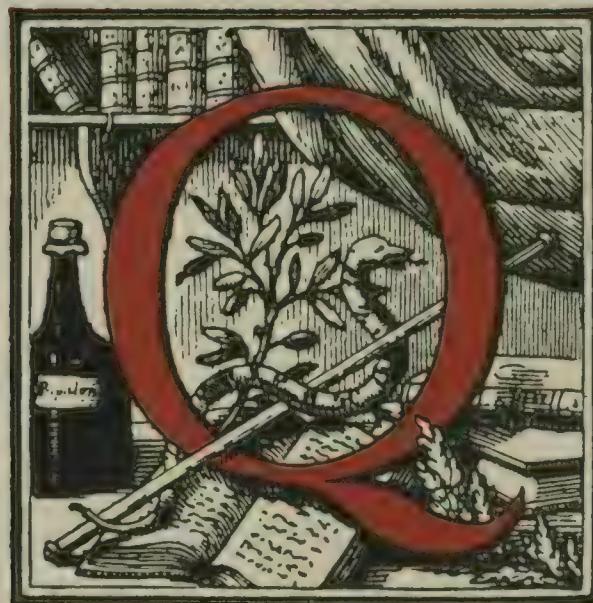
Clear varnish spray.

Gilders' gold dust from art-materials and craft shops.

Exotic foliage or seed-heads from Boots, Habitat, Next, Homebase and department stores.

The decorations shown are from a wide selection available at: Parterre Flowers, 8 Marylebone Passage, London W1N 7HE (071-323 1623).

CHRISTMAS



QUIZ

A post-pudding mental challenge compiled by Ursula Robertshaw.

A Why were the following famous "for 15 minutes"?

- 1 Kim Cotton
- 2 Sir John Nott
- 3 Simon Hayward
- 4 Susan Brown
- 5 Kit Williams
- 6 Linda Bellos
- 7 Keith Best
- 8 Stephen Waldorf

B Which are the correct definitions of the following words?

- 1 lammergeier
- a) an Alpine guide
- b) a bearded vulture
- c) a weatherproof jacket
- 2 libken
- a) a place of abode
- b) a term of endearment
- c) the seed of a species of poppy
- 3 euphrasy
- a) the art of fine writing
- b) a small flowering plant
- c) a false feeling of well-being
- 4 bressummer
- a) a supporting beam
- b) a spell of unseasonably warm weather, during the winter
- c) a conserve made with honey, lemons and herbs
- 5 jansky
- a) a short leather skirt worn over trousers by men in Anatolia
- b) impudent, saucy
- c) the unit of strength of radio-wave emission

6 pottingar

- a) an old Scottish word for apothecary
- b) a thick vegetable soup
- c) an Australian marsupial

7 sounder

- a) a dumpling flavoured with spices
- b) an amplifying system
- c) wild swine

8 chorizo

- a) a disease of the liver
- b) a three-stringed musical instrument played by Bushmen
- c) a kind of sausage

C

- 1 Which folk song, played by a brass band, reached the British charts in late 1977?
- 2 Which singer helped to compose "Me and My Shadow"?
- 3 Who invented the prepared piano?
- 4 What is the original meaning of the word vaudeville?
- 5 Of which British orchestra was André Previn the conductor in the 1970s?
- 6 What is a chord sequence?
- 7 Name the musical from which "76 Trombones" is taken
- 8 What is a Bösendorfer?
- 9 Why "5" in Dave Brubeck's "Take Five"?
- 10 In which film did Fats Waller sing "Ain't Misbehavin"?

D Of what well-known drinks or dishes are the following the main ingredients?

- 1 Orange juice, vodka, Galliano, ice cubes
- 2 Minced lamb, onions, garlic, aubergines
- 3 Beef stock, onion, carrot, swede, apple, curry paste, mango chutney
- 4 Redcurrant jelly, blanched lemon and orange rind, port, mustard
- 5 Basil leaves, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, olive oil
- 6 Egg yolks, caster sugar, Marsala

E For what British birds are these the local names?

- 1 Stumpy
- 2 Sheldapple
- 3 Stare
- 4 Polly wash dish
- 5 Billy-biter
- 6 Pick-a-tree
- 7 Scribbling lark
- 8 Laverock

And which birds gather in:

- 9 a siege
- 10 a herd
- 11 a dopping
- 12 a spring
- 13 a wisp
- 14 a fall
- 15 a watch
- 16 a charm?

F From what works, by whom, do the following passages come?

- 1 "The point under discussion was how far any singular gift in an individual was due to his ancestry, and how far to his own early training.

"In your own case," said I, "from all that you have told me it seems obvious that your faculty of observation and your peculiar facility for deduction are due to your own systematic training."

"To some extent," he answered, thoughtfully. "My ancestors were country squires, who appear to have led much the same life as is natural to their class. But, none the less, my turn that way is in my veins, and may have come with my grandmother, who was the sister of Vernet, the French artist. Art in the blood is liable to take the strangest forms."

2 "... this was Blackpool in early July, the big holiday season, with the whole place crammed and roaring with mums and dads and kids and girly-girls and imitation Knuts. ('I'm Gilbert the Filbert, the Knut with the K,' Basil Hallam was singing.) Anything that could claim a few pennies or trap a sixpence was in full swing. From the rowdy-dowdy South Shore to the more genteel North Shore, the holiday money of the



G To which famous people do these body-parts belong?

innocents was cascading, down into the shows, eating houses, shops that sold nothing worth having, the wine lodges and pubs, into the outstretched hands of pierrots and buskers, photographers, fake auctioneers, hoarse vendors of peppermint and pineapple Blackpool Rock and ice-cream and candy floss, fortune tellers, dealers in comic hats, false noses, miniature walking sticks, water pistols, balloons, and the things that rolled out as you blew and made rude noises. And there were mornings when nothing seemed real except the children hurrying with their buckets and spades and the wind blowing from the sea. And above it all, an iron upraised finger by day, a narrow constellation by night, rose the Tower, not new even then and seemingly a giant toy, but really perhaps a presage of a coming murderous age of towers."

3 "... as his blood cooled he felt that the chief result of the discussion was a deposit of dread within him at the idea of opening with his wife in future subjects which might again urge him to violent speech. It was as if a fracture in delicate crystal had begun, and he was afraid of any movement that might make it fatal. His

marriage would be a mere piece of bitter irony if they could not go on loving each other. He had long ago made up his mind to what he thought was her negative character—her want of sensibility, which showed itself in disregard both of his specific wishes and of his general aims. The first great disappointment had been borne: the tender devotedness and docile adoration of the ideal wife must be renounced, and life must be taken up on a lower stage of expectation, as it is by men who have lost their limbs. But the real wife had not only her claims, she had still a hold on his heart, and it was his intense desire that the hold should remain strong. In marriage, the certainty, 'She will never love me much,' is easier to bear than the fear, 'I shall love her no more.'"

4 "I shall take the simple-minded view that a theory is just a model of the universe, or a restricted part of it, and a set of rules that relate quantities in the model to observations that we make. It exists only in our minds and does not have any other reality (whatever that might mean). A theory is a good theory if it satisfies two requirements: It must accurately describe a large class of observations on the basis of a model

that contains only a few arbitrary elements, and it must make definite predictions about the results of future observations."

5 "It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies, could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is costly or new in their attire; how little it is biased by the texture of their muslin, and how unsusceptible of peculiar tenderness towards the spotted, the sprigged, the mull or the jackonet. Woman is fine for her own satisfaction alone. No man will admire her the more, no woman will like her the better for it. Neatness and fashion are enough for the former, and a something of shabbiness or impropriety will be most endearing to the latter."

6 "The muddy streets were gay. He strode homeward, conscious of an invisible grace pervading and making light his limbs. In spite of all he had done it. He had confessed and God had pardoned him. His soul was made fair and holy once more, holy and happy.

It would be beautiful to die if God so willed. It was beautiful to live in grace a life of peace and virtue and forbearance with others.

He sat by the fire in the kitchen, not daring to speak for happiness.

Till that moment he had not known how beautiful and peaceful life could be. The green square of paper pinned round the lamp cast down a tender shade. On the dresser was a plate of sausages and white pudding and on the shelf there were eggs. They would be for the breakfast in the morning after the communion in the college chapel. White pudding and eggs and sausages and cups of tea. How simple and beautiful was life after all! And life lay all before him."

7 "'But that was not the same snow,' I say. 'Our snow was not only shaken from whitewash buckets down the sky, it came shawling out of the ground and swam and drifted out of the arms and hands and bodies of the trees; snow grew overnight on the roofs of the houses like a pure and grandfather moss, minutely white-ivied the walls and settled on the postman, opening the gate, like a dumb, numb thunderstorm of white, torn Christmas cards.'"

H On what dates do the following fall?

- 1 Trafalgar Day
- 2 Oakapple Day
- 3 All Souls' Day
- 4 Candlemas
- 5 Shakespeare's birthday



I Name the artists responsible for these five cats.

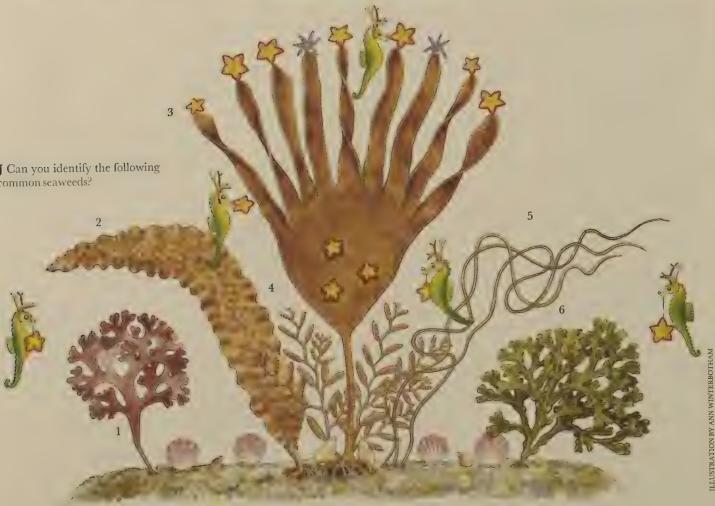


ILLUSTRATION BY ANN WINTERBOTHAM

J Can you identify the following common seaweeds?

6 Michaelmas Day
7 St Crispin's Day
8 Burns Night

K Name the 20th-century writers who have used the following pseudonyms:
1 Mary Westmacott
2 Robert Markham
3 Barbara Vine
4 Jane Somers
5 Dan Kavanagh

L From which novel, opera, play, poem and film are the following subtitles taken?
1 *A Tale of Manchester Life*
2 *The Flowers of Progress*
3 *The World well lost*
4 *The Growth of a Poet's Mind*
5 *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*

M
1 Of which film are these the opening words?
"I never knew the old Vienna before the War, with its Strauss music, its glamour and easy charm. Constantino suited me better."
2 What was the first film in colour to be awarded the Oscar for Best Picture?
3 Britain's first cinema was situated in London. Where?
4 What was the first film to be shot in CinemaScope?
5 What was the title of Walt

Disney's first full-length cartoon feature?
6 Which Ealing comedy was the first to be made in Technicolor?
7 Which comic character made his first screen appearance in 1914 in *Kid Auto Races at Venice*?

N The following pairs of actors have played the same film roles. What are they?
1 Merle Oberon and Geneviève Bijold
2 Paul Muni and Robert De Niro

3 Ronald Colman and Dirk Bogarde
4 Vivien Leigh and Sophia Loren
5 Clark Gable and Marlon Brando
6 Robert Donat and Richard Chamberlain
7 Flora Robson and Glenda Jackson
8 Montgomery Clift and Alec Guinness
9 John Wayne and Omar Sharif
10 Laurence Olivier and Mel Gibson

11 Timothy Dalton and Ralph Fiennes
12 Peter Cushing and Robert Stephens
13 Sean Connery and John Cleese
14 Wallace Beery and Orson Welles

O In which operas by Rossini do the following characters appear?
1 Matilda
2 Angelina
3 Pippo
4 Jemmy
5 Fiorilla
6 Fiorello
7 Miriam
8 Hubert
9 Alice
10 Oro

P In what year did the following take place?
1 George Stephenson's *Rocket* established a rail speed record of 29.1 miles per hour.

2 Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole.
3 Henry Stanley met David Livingstone in Africa.
4 Captain John Alcock and Lt Arthur Brown made the first non-stop transatlantic flight.
5 The planet Pluto was discovered.
6 Igor Sikorski built his first helicopter.
7 Lt Valentine Vladimovna Tereshkova became the first woman in space.
8 Francis Chichester began his solo circumnavigation.
9 The first successful solo ascent was made of Mount Everest, by Reinhold Messner.
10 The first atomic pile was built in a disused squash court at

My Dear Puglin,' wrote Sir Charles Barry, feeling the gold on silver body of his baroque black enamelled Pelikan pen cool and heavy in his hand, 'the essential modesty and unpretentiousness of the typical MP persuade me that the elaborate gothic ornametation you envisage for our Palace of Westminster design is somewhat excessive. Moreover, the Prince may think it a carbuncle.'



Numbered and signed by the craftsman's own hand
Pelikan Toledo M1900 Limited Edition Fountain Pen with 18ct Gold Nib £599.00

PRIZE CROSSWORD

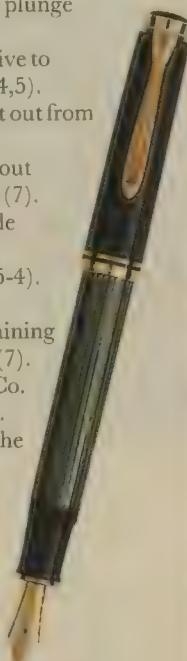
A Pelikan M800 fountain-pen, with 18-carat gold nib, will be given for the first correct solution to be opened on Monday, December 21, 1992. Entries should be sent to Crossword, The Illustrated London News, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF. The name of the winner and the solution to the puzzle will be published in our first issue of 1993.

ACROSS

- Paling when in a sword fight (7).
- Have a bet she's inherited property (7).
- A politician I excuse (5).
- The head on old Roman figures has vigour (9).
- Annual publication showing where the stars will be appearing (9).
- Refuse to declare, and get stick (5).
- Liable to be found lying (5).
- A serious complaint? Record it, with one's answer (9).
- In principle, one's king is the person to give a lead (9).
- One who dislikes a half-hearted party man (5).
- Little room for the sailor's log, perhaps? (5).
- Inferior envelope OK for this type of letter? (5,4).
- Dog making a din inside the alcove (3-6).
- Some sapper due to be concealed in ambush (5).
- Kind of egg-nog starter in the Orient (7).
- Garment suitable for the slit-eyed? (7).

DOWN

- Very light above, so break out (5,2).
- Be rough in form to the one next to you (9).
- Man introducing girl in characteristic words (5).
- Sort of cart for Jane Eyre (9).
- Plutocrat takes the plunge (5).
- What you would give to avoid somebody! (4,5).
- George the First set out from here in Wales (5).
- Feels aggrieved about Ernest's diversions (7).
- Wild rose in a gentle arrangement (9).
- Casual abandon (5-4).
- (4)? No, (9).
- Ghastly club containing broken-down bar (7).
- Game Burke and Co. resurrected . . . (7).
- . . . and one using the woods (5).
- Left port carrying freight (5).
- Lines known to those who understand the way of the world (5).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA STRANG

Q Identify these London landmarks.

the University of Chicago, Illinois.

11 James Starley invented the penny-farthing bicycle.

R What towns, cities or places are associated with the following legends or customs?

1 The city's healing waters were discovered by the banished Prince Bladud who cured his leprosy by bathing in a local bog.

2 A series of limestone caves by the river Axe, near Wells, in Somerset, was the home of a vindictive witch.

3 The spirit of Rupert Brooke walks through the garden of the Old Vicarage.

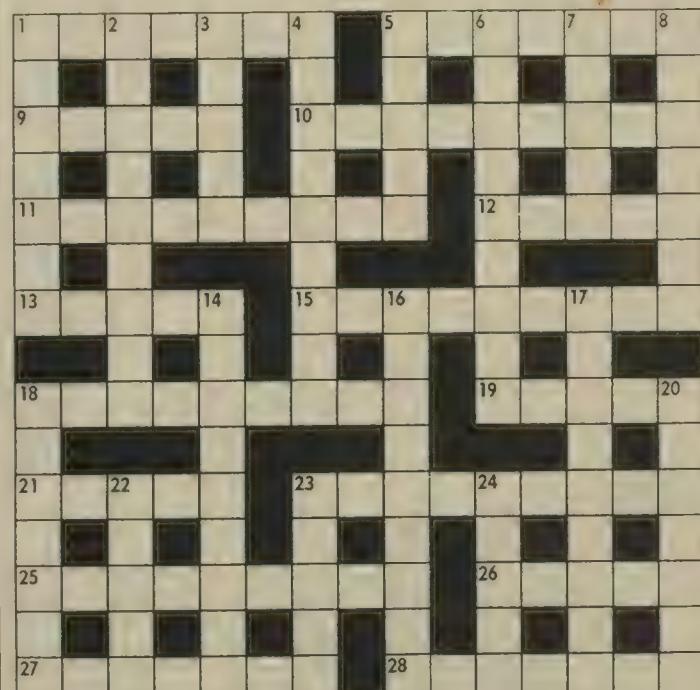
4 On May Day the townspeople make patterns of sand outside St John's Church to mark

King Canute's crossing of the river Lily during which he shook sand from his shoes.

5 To save her from a satyr, the gods turned a nymph into a spring, which became the Ebbing and Flowing Well.



Answers on page 96.



Name

Address

MIK AMABILINO

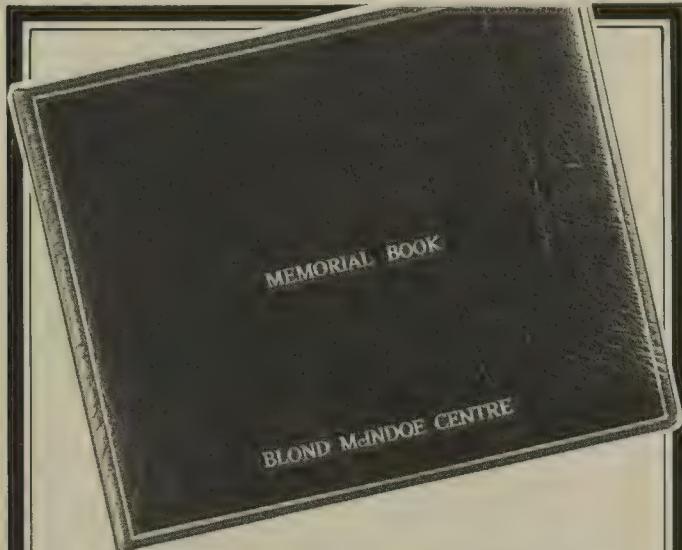
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TRAVEL TREATS

Gifts to take away, chosen by Helen Payne. Photographs by Roger Stowell.



*A selection of gift ideas for
the hardy traveller
(clockwise from top left).*

Sterling silver postcard (can be engraved with your message) by Bulgari, £950

*Steel and gold tubogas pillbox
set with green cabochon
peridot by Bulgari, £1,150.*

Bulgari ball-point pen, silver-plated and coral, £310.
Thermometer and compass (part of Victorinox SOS kit with various survival aids), available from Harrods, £106.50.

Bulgari gentleman's
stainless-steel chronograph
with Swiss quartz
movement, £3,800.

*Ray-Ban "Onyx" sun-glasses,
available in various
styles and colours at £129.*

Stainless-steel sporran flask
Holland & Holland, £45

Digiwalker hi-tech pedometer from Harrods, £29.75.

Collapsible drinking cup by Holland & Holland, £46.

Tiffany Swiss Army knife
in sterling silver,
with 27 features, £220.

*Miniature folding binoculars
made by Jason,
available from Holland &
Holland, £120.*

Sony ICF SW55 short-wave radio with digital tuning and worldwide clock, Wallace Heaton, £300.

Minox LX spy camera, able to copy documents, from Walling-Hastings £99.

Some essential equipment for
those who like it hot
(clockwise from top left):

Copy of the original Mark 3
Army compass, in
solid brass, available from
Harrods, £295.

Leather-bound world atlas by
Tiffany & Co., £45.

"Nuvoo" sun-glasses by
Ray-Ban, £95.

Sterling silver pocket sundial
by Tiffany & Co., £70.

Hand-painted enamel globe
incorporating a clock,
with hand-decorated dial, by
Halcyon Days, £360.

Contax T2 camera, 35mm
Carl Zeiss Sonnar
lens, Wallace Heaton, £600.

Airva HSPX1000 titanium-
coated personal stereo with
multi-band processor, from
Wallace Heaton, £200.

Bulgari fish-shaped 18-
carat gold, £3,200.

Jaun Lassale gold chronograph
18-carat gold and steel
multi-function chronograph,
from Harrods, £1,250.

Bulgari "colombia" money
clip, 18-carat gold, £200.

ADDRESSES
Bulgari, 172 Old Bond Street,
W1; tel: 071-8729900.

Halcyon Days Enamels,
14 Brude Street, W1;
tel: 071-2296811.

Harrods, Knightsbridge,
SW1; tel: 071-7301234.

Holland & Holland,
31 Bruton Street, W1;
tel: 071-4994411.

Ray-Ban, for nearest stockists
tel: 081-9797788.

Tiffany, 25 Old Bond Street,
W1; tel: 071-4092799.
Wallace Heaton, 127
New Bond Street, W1;
tel: 071-6297511.



ILN'S SELECTIVE GUIDE TO SOME OF LONDON'S MOST INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING EVENTS

FESTIVE SEASON

THEATRE

Peter O'Toole is back in the West

End in Our Song & Robert Lindsay appears as Cyrano de Bergerac in early December. Promising revivals include *Hay Fever*, with Maria Aitken, *Trelawny of the Wells*, featuring Michael Hordern, & *Carousel*, headed by Patricia Routledge. Two anniversaries are feted: the Queen's 40-year reign is marked by *Happy & Glorious* while Agatha Christie's play *The Mousetrap* celebrates its 40th birthday on Nov 25.

Addresses & telephone numbers are given on the first occasion a theatre's entry appears.

Annie Get Your Gun. Irving Berlin's musical in which Annie Oakley gets her man. With Kim Criswell & John Diedrich. Opens Nov 25. *Prince of Wales*, Coventry St, W1 (071-839 5987).

Assassins. Challenging musical by Stephen Sondheim & John Weidman focusing on American history as seen through the eyes of eight assassins or would-be killers of American presidents. Until Jan 9. *Donmar Warehouse*, Earlham St, WC2 (071-867 1150).

Barnum. Paul Nicholas plays the 19th-century American showman P.T. Barnum in a revival of this musical. Opens Dec 17. *Dominion*, Tottenham Court Rd, W1 (071-580 9562).

Billy Liar. A 1959 comedy by Keith Waterhouse & Willis Hall about an undertaker's clerk with a vivid imagination. Opens Dec 15. *Cottesloe*, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252).

Carousel. Nicholas Hytner directs the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical about a deceased carnival barker who returns from Heaven to sort out his family's affairs. Opens Dec 10. *Lyttelton*, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252).

Cyrano de Bergerac. Robert Lindsay is the long-nosed poet, philosopher & letter-writing lover in Edmond

Rostand's play. Elijah Moshinsky directs. Opens Dec 14. *Theatre Royal, Haymarket*, SW1 (071-930 8800).

Death & the Maiden. Powerful Chilean drama about guilt & revenge involves a confrontation between a woman & the doctor who tortured her 15 years earlier. With Penny Downie, Danny Webb & Hugh Ross. Until Nov 28. *Duke of York's*, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 5122).

The Gifts of the Gorgon. New play by Peter Shaffer about a writer's stormy marriage. Peter Hall directs. With Judi Dench, Michael Pennington & Jeremy Northam. Opens Dec 16. *The Pit*, Barbican, EC2 (071-638 8891).

Hamlet. Compass Theatre Com-

pany's production, with Paul Rider as the Prince. In repertory with *King Lear*. Dec 7-19. *Lilian Baylis Theatre*, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (071-837 4104).

Happy & Glorious. A star-studded entertainment, to be attended by the Queen to mark her 40-year reign, that takes a light-hearted look at the past four decades. Nov 30. *Theatre Royal, Haymarket*.

Hay Fever. Noël Coward's comedy of bad manners involving a country-house weekend hosted by the theatrical Bliss family. With Maria Aitken & John Standing. Alan Strachan directs. Opens Nov 26. *Albery*, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-867 1115).

An Ideal Husband. A London diplomat's career is jeopardised by the reappearance of an old flame in Oscar Wilde's play. Peter Hall directs. With Anna Carteret, Michael Denison, Hannah Gordon, Dulcie Gray & Martin Shaw. *Globe*, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (071-494 5067).

It Runs in the Family. New farce by Ray Cooney about a neurologist's efforts to keep his illegitimate teenage son a secret. *Playhouse*, Northumberland Ave, WC2 (071-839 4401).

June Moon. A 1929 satire on New York's song-writing industry. *Vaudeville*, Strand, WC2 (071-836 9987).

Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical. Harold Prince directs this



Brent Carver & Chita Rivera in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* at the Shaftesbury.

adaptation of Manuel Puig's novel about disparate cellmates—a left-wing journalist & a gay man obsessed by 1940s Hollywood musicals. With Chita Rivera, Brent Carver & Anthony Crivello. *Shaftesbury Theatre*, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2 (071-379 5399).

Lost in Yonkers. Neil Simon's affectionate, autobiographical comedy, set in 1942 New York. With Maureen Lipman & Rosemary Harris. Opens Nov 12. *Strand Theatre*, Aldwych, WC2 (071-930 8800).

Macbeth. Tony Haygarth plays the title role for the English Shakespeare Company. Michael Bogdanov directs. In repertory with *The Tempest*. Nov 24-Dec 12. *Royalty*, Portugal St, WC2 (071-494 5041).

Making It Better. A comedy with Jane Asher as a BBC World Service producer who becomes involved with her gay husband's Czech student lover & a Czech émigré writer. *Criterion*, Piccadilly Circus, W1 (071-839 4488).

A Midsummer Night's Dream. Visually inventive but hardly illuminating staging by Robert Lepage, who places Shakespeare's squabbling lovers & fairy folk in the primordial gloom of a mud-drenched pool. Angela Laurier's androgynous Puck impresses with her acrobatic skills but struggles with the verse. The production dazzles & bores in equal measure. *Olivier*, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252).

Murder by Misadventure. Gerald Harper & William Gaunt play crime writers, each trying to do away with the other. *Whitehall Theatre*, Whitehall, SW1 (071-867 1119).

No Man's Land. Harold Pinter appears with Paul Eddington in his own 1975 play about the enigmatic meeting of two literary men. Until Dec 19. *Almeida Theatre*, Almeida St, N1 (071-359 4404).

Our Song. Keith Waterhouse adapts his own novel about a doomed love affair between a middle-aged man (Peter O'Toole) & a vivacious young woman (Tara Fitzgerald). *Apollo*, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (071-494 5070).

The Prisoner of Zenda. An adaptation of Anthony Hope's original Ruritanian romance. Opens Dec 17. *Greenwich Theatre*, Grooms Hill, SE10 (081-858 7755).

Pygmalion. This whole-hearted production, with Alan Howard as Higgins & Frances Barber as Eliza, shows that the musical has not killed off Bernard Shaw's play. Until Jan 12. *Olivier*, National Theatre.

Radio Times. Musical comedy, composed by Noel Gay, set in a BBC radio studio in 1940 London. With Tony Slattery. *Queen's*, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2 (071-494 5041).

The Rise & Fall of Little Voice. Jim Cartwright's off-beat play has Jane Horrocks as a young woman who lives life through old records while her mother (Alison Steadman in a show-stealing performance) hunts for a man. *Aldwych Theatre*, Aldwych, WC2 (071-836 6404).

Romeo & Juliet. Michael Maloney & Clare Holman seem rather mature lovers in David Leveaux's production & lack the passion of the fights & crowd scenes. Until Nov 28. *Barbican Theatre*, Barbican, EC2 (071-638 8891).

Six Degrees of Separation. Fast-paced moral comedy by John Guare inspired by the case of a con artist who fooled rich Manhattanites by posing as Sidney Poitier's son. Stockard Channing is superb as an art-dealer's wife. Until Nov 28. *Comedy*, Panton St, SW1 (071-867 1045).

Square Rounds. Poetry, polemics & state magic combine in a stylised, sometimes perplexing exploration of the moral & social responsibilities of scientists. Written & directed by poet Tony Harrison, with Sara Kestelman & Maria Friedman standing out in the mainly female cast. *Olivier*, National Theatre.

Stages. Lindsay Anderson directs David Storey's latest drama with Alan Bates as an aging artist who reflects on his past. With Joanna David, Gabrielle Lloyd, Rosemary Martin & Marjorie Yates. Opens Nov 18. *Cottesloe*, National Theatre.



Richard Moore in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Harriet Walter in *Three Birds Alighting On a Field*. Forest Whitaker & Stephen Rea in *The Crying Game*.

The Tempest. Yukio Ninagawa's company presents its acclaimed Noh version of Shakespeare's play. Dec 3-5. *Barbican Theatre, Barbican*.

The Tempest. The English Shakespeare Company's production, directed by Michael Bogdanov, with John Woodvine as Prospero. In repertory with *Macbeth*. Nov 26-Dec 12. *Royalty*.

The Thebans. Adrian Noble directs a new translation of Sophocles's trilogy. With Gerard Murphy as Oedipus & Joanne Pearce as Antigone. Until Nov 26. *Barbican Theatre, Barbican*.

Three Birds Alighting On a Field. Timberlake Wertenbaker's satire of the contemporary art world, with Harriet Walter heading the cast. *Royal Court, Sloane Sq, SW1* (071-730 1745).

Trelawny of the Wells. Arthur Wing Pinero's theatrical comedy, with Michael Hordern, Sarah Brightman, Helena Bonham-Carter & Margaret Courtenay. Opens Dec 7. *Comedy*.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Entertaining Stratford production sets Shakespeare's early romantic comedy in 1930s high society for its story of one man's pursuit of his best friend's girl. An on-stage palm court orchestra punctuates the action with love songs by the likes of Porter & Gershwin. Richard Moore's lugubrious servant is a comic highlight. *Barbican Theatre, Barbican*.

RECOMMENDED

LONG RUNNERS

Blood Brothers, *Phoenix* (071-867 1044); **Buddy,** *Victoria Palace* (071-834 1317); **Carmen Jones,** *Old Vic* (071-928 7616); **Cats,** *New London* (071-405 0072); **Dancing at Lugh-nasa,** *Garrick* (071-494 5085); **Five**

Guys Named Moe, *Lyric* (071-494 5045); **Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,** *Palladium* (071-494 5020); **Me & My Girl,** *Adelphi* (071-836 7611); **Les Misérables,** *Palace* (071-434 0909); **Miss Saigon,** *Theatre Royal, Drury Lane* (071-494 5060); **The Mousetrap,** *St Martin's* (071-836 1443); **The Phantom of the Opera,** *Her Majesty's*

(071-494 5400); **Return to the Forbidden Planet,** *Cambridge* (071-379 5299); **Starlight Express,** *Apollo Victoria* (071-630 6262); **The Woman in Black,** *Fortune* (071-836 2238). **OUT OF TOWN**

RSC Season at Stratford: At the Royal Shakespeare Theatre: *The Taming of the Shrew*, with Anton Lesser & Amanda Harris. *As You Like It*, with Samantha Bond as Rosalind. *The Winter's Tale*, directed by Adrian Noble. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by David Thacker. *Antony & Cleopatra*, with Richard Johnson & Clare Higgins. At the Swan Theatre: *The Beggar's Opera*, with David Burt & Jenna Russell. *A Jovial Crew*, Richard Brome's 1641 comedy. *All's Well That Ends Well*, directed by Peter Hall. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, with Antony Sher. Middleton & Rowley's *The Changeling*. At The Other Place: *The Odyssey*, a retelling of Homer's epic by Caribbean dramatist Derek Walcott. *The School of Night*, a new play by Peter Whelan about Christopher Marlowe. *Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire* (CV37 6BB) (0789 295623).

CHRISTMAS & CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Aladdin. Sophie Lawrence in the title role. Dec 9-Jan 9. *Thordike, Leatherhead, Surrey* (0372 377677). **Aladdin.** Unusually, here the leading role is taken by a man, Karl Howman. Dec 17-Jan 9. *Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, Surrey* (0483 60191).

A Christmas Carol. Christopher Biggins & Bryan Johnson in Charles Dickens's much-loved story. Nov 24-Dec 5. *Shaw Theatre, 100 Euston Rd, NW1* (071-388 1394). **A Christmas Carol.** Musical adaptation of Dickens's tale by Ron Pember who himself plays the miserly Scrooge. Dec 7-Jan 2. *Mermaid, Puddle Dock, EC4* (071-410 0000).

Dick Whittington. With Jimmy Tarbuck, George Sewell & Susan Maughan. Dec 11-Jan 16. *Churchill, Bromley, Kent* (081-460 6677).

Dragon. English version of a Russian

fairy-tale about a knight's confrontation with a tyrannical three-headed dragon. Designs by Ultz; animal characters created by *Spitting Image*. *Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1* (071-928 2252).

Fireman Sam: Ready for Action. The television hero entertains the very young. Dec 8-Jan 3. *Lyric Hammersmith, King St, W6* (071-741 2311).

Goldilocks & the Three Bears. Michaela Strachan & Bobby Davro head the cast. Dec 18-Jan 30. *Wimbledon Theatre, 93 The Broadway, SW19* (081-540 0362).

Mowgli, l'enfant loup. The Strasbourg Théâtre Jeune Public performs Kipling with English narration. Dec 1-5. *Lyric Hammersmith, King St, W6* (081-741 2311).

Pinocchio. Play about the talking puppet who became a real boy. Dec 11-Jan 9. *Shaw Theatre*.

Pinocchio. New musical version. Nov 14-Jan 24. *Unicorn, Great Newport St, WC2* (071-836 3334).

The Snow Queen. Revival of last year's play. Nov 12-Jan 9. *Young Vic, The Cut, SE1* (071-928 6363).

Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs. With Marti Caine & Derek Griffiths. Dec 11-Jan 23. *Richmond Theatre, Richmond, Surrey* (081-940 0088).

Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs. Cast led by Linda Lusardi & Stu Francis. Dec 11-Jan 17. *Ashcroft, Croydon, Surrey* (081-688 9291).

Sooty's Picnic. Glove puppets for the very young. Dec 14-Jan 2. *Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon St, WC1* (071-387 9629).

The Witches. Roald Dahl's novel adapted & directed by David Wood. Dec 1-Jan 23. *Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2* (071-836 5122).

Whittington Junior & His Sensation Cat. Traditional 1870 panto in one of London's last remaining music-halls. Dec 9-Feb 7. *Players', Villiers St, WC2* (071-839 1134).

The Wizard of Oz. Special Christmas production. Nov 19-Feb 6. *Polka, 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19* (081-543 4888).

CINEMA

A 10-year-old film will close the 36th London Film Festival on Nov 22. It is, however, at last shown as its director, Ridley Scott, had intended. The "Director's Cut" of *Blade Runner* is a huge improvement. The best news at the Festival is regarding the former Thames Silents, restorations of silent cinema from the team of Kevin Brownlow, David Gill & the composer Carl Davis, which are back, thanks to Channel 4.

On Nov 20 & 21 Londoners can see Rex Ingram's astonishing work, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, starring Rudolph Valentino, with a live orchestral score. After that, modern cinema does appear somewhat pallid in comparison.

As You Like It (U). The screenplay is pure Shakespeare, the setting modern Docklands, with the Forest of Arden an empty concrete waste in the shadow of Canary Wharf. James Fox is a weary Jaques, Anthony Tiernan in the dual role of Orlando & Oliver, the former a drop-out, the latter a yuppie, Emma Croft & Celia Bannerman excellent as Rosalind & Celia, & Griff Rhys Jones as Touchstone. Directed by Christine Edzard.

Beauty & the Beast (U). The classic fairy story has had many films based on it, even *King Kong*, but the new Disney cartoon follows along in the traditional style of the studio's animated fantasies, with songs by Alan Menken. However, Beauty, in accordance with current notions of political correctness, is palpably intelligent, strong-willed & assertive, unlike stereotypical heroines.

Bitter Moon (18). In Roman Polanski's black comedy an English couple (Hugh Grant & Kristin Scott Thomas) meet, on a Mediterranean cruise ship, Mimi, an uninhibited young Frenchwoman (Emmanuelle



Malkovich & Sinise in *Of Mice & Men*, Streep in *Death Becomes Her*, Day-Lewis in *The Last of the Mohicans*, Redford & his surveillance team in *Sneakers*.

Seigner) & her paralysed American husband (Peter Coyote). He insists on recounting the history of their bizarre, erotic courtship.

Blade Runner: The Director's Cut

(15). Ridley Scott's 1982 bleak-future film, shorn of its studio-imposed tedious narration & bogus upbeat ending, regains its integrity. Harrison Ford is a sort of cop whose job it is to hunt highly developed androids who are menacing a congested, rain-drenched, hellish Los Angeles in the late 21st century. The film is both exaggerated & visionary like much of the best science fiction. Opens Nov 27.

Boomerang (15). Eddie Murphy plays a smooth womaniser who meets his match with his new boss (Robin Givens), who can outdistance him. The basic joke wears thin after nearly two hours.

City of Joy (12). In Calcutta two men of different cultures meet & decide they have a common interest in the vast, teeming city & its terrible poverty. One, Masari Pal, is a villager, forced by drought to migrate to Calcutta & seek a living as a rickshaw driver; the other, Patrick Swayze, is an American surgeon in India for the first time. The director is Roland Joffé.

The Crying Game (18). Neil Jordan's new film divides into two parts: the first a brilliantly-realised, tense interchange between an IRA kidnapper (Stephen Rea) & his hostage, a black British soldier (Forest Whitaker). Then the mood changes when the action shifts to mainland Britain as the Irishman seeks out the victim's partner in a London pub.

Death Becomes Her (PG). A triangle involving an aging star, her jealous ex-high-school friend & a plastic surgeon. The star is Meryl Streep who snatches Bruce Willis from Goldie Hawn. Years later an immortality potion gives the woman youthful looks at a terrible price. Robert Zemeckis directs an absurd horror farce that relies more on special effects than on genuine wit. Opens Dec 4.

Gas Food Lodging (15). In Allison

Anders's notable début film, Brooke Adams plays a single mother raising two daughters in New Mexico, on her precarious income from a diner. The elder (Ione Skye) is promiscuous until she finds a nice geologist, but he appears to abandon her when she is pregnant. The younger (Fairuza Balk), a romantic whose imagination is fed by Hispanic films, looks for her lost father.

Glengarry Glen Ross (15). David Mamet's adaptation of his sharply satirical play about competitive selling is directed at a brisk pace by James Foley with virtually no "opening up" for the screen. The ensemble cast is excellent, but outstanding are Jack Lemmon as the has-been & Al Pacino as the aggressive newcomer.

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York

(PG). In the original, highly successful comedy young Macaulay Culkin was accidentally left behind by his family when they went on a Christmas holiday & he outwitted a pair of prospective burglars (Daniel Stern & Joe Pesci). The sequel finds Culkin mislaid by his parents in the Big Apple with the same crooks in hot pursuit. Chris Columbus once again directs. Opens Dec 11.

Husbands & Wives (15). Woody Allen's film on marital collapse in middle-class Manhattan has been overshadowed by personal events in his real-life relationship with co-star Mia Farrow, making it hard to evaluate objectively. He plays a college professor who falls for a student (Juliette Lewis). The film examines the death throes of the teacher's marriage, with Farrow as the wife, & the tortured relationship of her friend (Judy Davis) whose egotistical partner (Sydney Pollack) abandons her for an aerobics instructor. The style is mock *cinéma-vérité* which is unnecessarily tiring.

The Last of the Mohicans (12). Daniel Day-Lewis is eminently watchable as James Fenimore Cooper's Hawkeye, the white child raised by Indians who becomes involved in the war between Britain &

France for control of the American colonies in 1757. Michael Mann's film is superbly photographed & the action scenes are stunning. But the alliances & enmities of several Indian tribes are confusingly presented, & the storyline owes more to Philip Dunne's original 1936 screenplay than to Cooper's novel.

Of Mice & Men (PG). John Steinbeck's novel was filmed effectively by Lewis Milestone in 1939 & is hard to improve on. This new adaptation by Horton Foote tries hard. It is directed by Gary Sinise who also plays George, the itinerant Californian ranch worker, minder & friend to the simple-witted Lenny (John Malkovich). Sherilyn Fenn is the bored, flirtatious farmer's wife & catalyst of the eventual tragedy. Opens Nov 27.

Peter's Friends (15). Chosen to open the London Film Festival, Kenneth Branagh's film is about a New Year house party for a group of friends who knew each other at university. Old relationships rekindle but there's a poignant awareness that time has changed things. It is like a funnier, anglicised version of *The Big Chill*, with a cast including Branagh, Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Imelda Staunton, Tony Slattery & Phyllida Law. Opens Nov 13.

Prague (12). Alan Cumming plays a man who journeys from England to Czechoslovakia in search of clues about his grandparents. He is drawn towards a young woman (Sandrine Bonnaire) who helps him to obtain a piece of precious newsreel footage, & finds his new emotional rapport with Prague overwhelming. Written & directed by Ian Sellar, who made *Venus Peter*.

Single White Female (18). Bridget Fonda advertises for a flatmate to share her Manhattan apartment. She gets Jennifer Jason Leigh, who begins to copy her in every last detail until she could be her twin. It then turns into a conventional urban nightmare as it descends into psychopathic bathos.

Directed by Barbet Schroeder. Opens Nov 20.

Sister Act (PG). Whoopi Goldberg is a Reno nightclubsinger who witnesses a mobster murder & is placed in a safe house until the time comes to give her evidence. The chosen place is a convent, where she establishes herself as an unconventional leader of the choir. A comedy-thriller directed by Emile Ardolino. Opens Nov 20.

Sneakers (12). Robert Redford is back on form as the leader of a group of security analysts who hijack a device that will allow them to hack into any program. The others are Sidney Poitier, Dan Aykroyd, River Phoenix & David Strathairn. The director is Phil Alden Robinson. Opens Nov 13.

Strictly Ballroom (PG). In Australia ballroom dancing would appear to be a fiercely contested spectator sport, played according to rigid rules & bitter rivalries. A young dancer strikes out on his own, selecting an unpromising partner & coaching her into becoming the sensation of the dance floor. Baz Luhrmann's début film is dazzlingly photographed, funny & refreshing.

Unlawful Entry (18). Ray Liotta delivers a compellingly sinister performance as a Los Angeles policeman who becomes fixated by the wife (Madeleine Stowe) of a couple who have reported a break-in, & is bent on humiliating the husband (Kurt Russell). Otherwise it is a conventional paranoid thriller, directed by Jonathan Kaplan.

Wuthering Heights (U). Ralph Fiennes as the brooding Heathcliff, Juliette Binoche as a somewhat Gallic Cathy in Peter Kosminsky's version of Emily Brontë's literary classic. More of the story is attempted than in the 1939 film with Olivier & Oberon, but the North Yorkshire locations have been carefully chosen to heighten the Gothic atmosphere.

London Film Festival. The 36th festival runs until Nov 22. Bookings: 071-928 3232. Information hotline: 071-928 2695.



Set design by David Hockney for *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Costume design by James Merifield for *Princess Ida*. London Contemporary Dance in Rooster.

OPERA

David Hockney designs a production of Strauss's fairy-tale opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, at Covent Garden. Ken Russell directs Gilbert & Sullivan's *Princess Ida* for English National Opera. Mecklenburgh Opera stages the British première of an opera by the Slovakian composer Juraj Beneš. There are further opportunities to catch *Elektra*, a stimulating production from Welsh National Opera.

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA

London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-836 3161/071-240 5258).

Wozzeck. David Pountney's outstanding production, with Donald Maxwell repeating his moving performance of the title role & Kristine Ciesinski as Marie. Richard Armstrong conducts. Nov 12, 19, 21, 26.

The Magic Flute. Last chance to see a well-sung revival, with Paul Nilon as Tamino & Gillian Webster as Pamina. Nov 13.

Princess Ida. Ken Russell directs this new staging, which is designed by James Merifield & conducted by Jane Glover. The cast includes Rosemary Joshua, Anne Collins, Anne-Marie Owens, Richard Van Allan, John Graham-Hall. Nov 14, 18, 20, 23, 24, 27, Dec 1, 3, 4, 10, 12, 15.

Hansel & Gretel. David Pountney's disturbing production explores the sinister depths of Humperdinck's opera. Ethna Robinson & Rosa Manison sing the title roles & Phyllis Cannan is the Witch/Mother. Nov 25, 28, Dec 2, 5, 9, 11, 17.

MECKLENBURGH OPERA

The Place, Duke's Rd, WC1 (071-387 0031).

Petrified. British première of Juraj Beneš's chamber opera, based on the poems of the 19th-century poet Janko Král, written to celebrate Slovakia's national identity. Anne Manson conducts. Nov 26, 27, 28, 30, Dec 1, 3, 4, 5.

ROYAL OPERA

Covent Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066).

Die Frau ohne Schatten. Bernard Haitink conducts a new production, directed by John Cox & designed by David Hockney. Cast includes Anna Tomowa-Sintow as the Empress, Gwyneth Jones as the Dyer's Wife, Franz Grundheber as Barak. Nov 16, 20, 23, 25, 28.

Madama Butterfly. Japanese soprano Yoko Watanabe sings the title role, with Arthur Davies as Pinkerton, in Nuria Espert's production, conducted by Siân Edwards. Nov 27, 30, Dec 3, 8, 11, 14, 17.

OUT OF TOWN

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA

Falstaff. Jonathan Veira gives the most polished performance as the fat knight; Stephen Barlow conducts.

Don Giovanni. William Dazely & Ashley Thorburn are interestingly matched as master & servant in Stephen Medcalf's production.

Haymarket, Leicester (0533 539797); Nov 10-14. Opera House, Buxton (0298 72190); Nov 17-21. Theatre Royal, Bath (0225 448844); Nov 24-28. Swan, Weymouth (0494 512000); Dec 1-5.

GLYNDERBOURNE TOURING OPERA

The Rake's Progress. Well-sung revival of Stravinsky's morality with Barry Banks as Tom Rakewell & Anne Dawson as Anne Trulove; Steven Page gives a powerful portrayal of the manipulating Nick Shadow.

Le nozze di Figaro. Ralf Lukas's Count dominates Stephen Medcalf's production in John Gunter's clinical white sets.

Katya Kabanova. Susan Bullock gives a finely-sung, deeply-felt performance in the title role; the rest of the cast give strong support in a production not to be missed.

Mayflower Theatre, Southampton (0703 229771); Nov 10-14. Opera House, Manchester (061-236 9922); Nov 17-21. Apollo, Oxford (0865 244544); Nov 24-28.

OPERA NORTH

Grand Theatre, Leeds (0532 459351).

Billy Budd. Jason Howard sings the

title role in Graham Vick's production, with John Tomlinson as Claggart & Nigel Robson as Captain Vere. Elgar Howarth conducts. Dec 11, 17, 19.

SCOTTISH OPERA

Il trovatore. 1991 Cardiff Singer of the World Lisa Gasteen sings Leonora, with Paolo Kudriavchenko as Manrico.

Julius Caesar. Michael Chance sings the title role, with Joan Rodgers as Cleopatra.

Cosi fan tutte. Anne Williams-King & Elizabeth McCormack are the two ladies, Kevin Anderson & Martin Higgins their treacherous lovers.

Theatre Royal, Newcastle (091-232 2061); Nov 10-21. King's, Edinburgh (031-220 4349); Nov 24-28.

TRAVELING OPERA

Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford (0483 60191).

Carmen. Dec 7, 8, 11, 12.

Don Giovanni. Dec 9, 10.

WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

Elektra. David Alden's production bears the familiar trademarks of naked light bulb, blood-stained walls, & off-stage torture but explores the destructive relationships between the members of Agamemnon's family to powerful effect. Janet Hardy & Felicity Palmer respond with commitment to the demands of both the music & the staging, in the roles of Elektra & Klytemnestra.

Tosca. New production by Michael Blakemore, with Suzanne Murphy, Christine Bunning & Anne Heath Welch alternating in the title role & Dennis O'Neill/Maurice Saltarin as Cavaradossi.

The Barber of Seville. Fiona Janes sings Rosina, Neill Archer Almaviva, David Barrell Figaro.

New Theatre, Cardiff (0222 394844); Nov 10-14. Hippodrome, Birmingham (021-622 7486); Nov 17-21. Empire, Liverpool (051-709 1555); Nov 24-28. Mayflower Theatre, Southampton (0703 229771); Dec 1-5.

Barber, Cosi fan tutte. New Pavilion, Rhyl (0745 330000); Dec 7-12.

DANCE

The Royal Ballet offers *Tales of Beatrix Potter* as a Christmas treat for the family. Another of the traditional favourites, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, celebrates its centenary in December. Different versions will be performed here by the Birmingham Royal Ballet & Moscow City Ballet. Modern dance enthusiasts will not want to miss the LCDT season, which includes three premières.

London City Ballet. Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet*, choreographed by Ben Stevenson, opens the season. Dec 8-11, 12 (m&e), 17-19. Triple bill: *Les Patineurs*, choreography by Ashton, *The Witchboy*, by Carter, *Donizetti Variations* by Balanchine. Dec 14-16. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (071-278 8916).

London Contemporary Dance Theatre. Specialists in modern dance, this company of 16 presents works by some of the foremost choreographers of the day. Programme one: London premières of Mark Morris's *Motorcade* & Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, & Arnie Zane's *Freedom of Information*, Nov 24-28; programme two: London première of *My Father's Vertigo* by Amanda Miller, *Motorcade*, *Rikud*, Dec 1-5. Sadler's Wells.

Moscow City Ballet. Centenary performances of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, first seen in St Petersburg on December 18, 1892. Two of the company's youngest stars, Evgenia Vorobieva & Elvira Rikova, share the role of Clara. Nov 23-28. *Wimbledon Theatre, Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 (081-540 0362).*

Northern Ballet Theatre. New ballet based on *A Christmas Carol*, by Dickens, choreographed by Massimo Moriconi. Until Nov 14. *Royalty, Portuguese St, WC2 (071-494 5090).*

Royal Ballet. *Swan Lake*. Anthony Dowell's production, with the role of Odette/Odile danced in turn by



Modern Living at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Lothar Zagrosek conducts the London Sinfonietta. Håkan Hardenberger appears with the English Chamber Orchestra.

Deborah Bull, Sylvie Guillem, Darcey Bussell, Lesley Collier & Viviana Durante, Nov 14, 17, 24, Dec 1, 9, 15, 19. *Mayerling*. Kenneth MacMillan's ballet, designed by Nicholas Georgiadis. Irek Mukhamedov, Michael Nunn, Zoltan Solymosi & Stephen Jefferies alternate in the role of Crown Prince Rudolf, whose suicide pact with Mary Vetscra is the climax of the work. Nov 18, 19, 21, 26, Dec 2, 10. Double bill: *The Dream*, Ashton's choreography to Mendelssohn's music, & *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, Anthony Dowell's staging of Ashton's choreography, with David Bintley as Mis Tiggy Winkle, Dec 4, 5, 12 (m&c), 16, 22. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066).

St Petersburg Ballet Theatre. Boris Eifman's company of 50 dancers makes its UK débüt with two productions. *Thérèse Raquin*, based on the novel by Emile Zola, is set to music by Bach & Schnittke's Piano Concerto. *Figaro's Intrigues* is a *ballet bouffé* based on Beaumarchais's comedy *The Barber of Seville* & set to Rossini's music for the opera. Nov 18-21. Sadler's Wells.

Small Acts. An international group including dancer/choreographer Jonathan Lunn, dancer Lauren Potter, designer Peter Mumford, saxophonist Andy Sheppard & percussionist Nana Vasconcelos unite to present *Modern Living*, a new contemporary dance work. Dec 5, 6. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-928 8800). OUT OF TOWN

Birmingham Royal Ballet. Peter Wright's production & choreography, with Lev Ivanov & Vincent Redmon, of *The Nutcracker*, Tchaikovsky's ballet based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffman. Guests appearing with the company include Jonathan Cope, as the Prince; Anna Villalobos from the Bavarian State Ballet, as Clara; Lynn Charles as the Sugar Plum Fairy; Laurent Novis, from the Paris Opéra Ballet, as the Prince. Dec 1-19, matinees Dec 5, 10, 12, 17, 19. Hippodrome, Birmingham (021-622 7486).

MUSIC

A festival of Scandinavian arts, centred at the Barbican, includes major concert cycles of the works of Jean Sibelius & Carl Nielsen. It coincides with the welcome reopening of the Wigmore Hall, which presents a series of recitals given by some of Scandinavia's leading singers. There are also plenty of opportunities for audiences to join in the singing of Christmas carols.

BARBICAN HALL

Silk St, EC2 (071-638 8891).

London Symphony Orchestra. Michael Tilson Thomas conducts Bartók's Violin Concerto, with Midori, & Mahler's Symphony No 1. Nov 12, 7.30pm.

CBSO Nielsen Cycle. Simon Rattle conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in Nielsen's Symphonies Nos 1-6, & Lieder by Mahler, sung by Olaf Baer, baritone. Nov 13, 20, 28, 7.15pm.

Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. Neemi Jarvi conducts Sibelius, Stenhammar & Stravinsky, Nov 14; Grieg & Bartók, Nov 18, 7.30pm.

English Chamber Orchestra. Paavo Berglund conducts Nielsen's Flute Concerto, with William Bennett, Haydn's Trumpet Concerto, with Håkan Hardenberger, & Symphony No 92 (Oxford), Nov 16; Sallinen's Chamber Music III, for cello or string orchestra, & Haydn's Cello Concerto, both with Arto Noras, Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto, with Emma Johnson, Haydn's Symphony No 99, Nov 24; 7.30pm.

LSO Sibelius Cycle. Colin Davis conducts the London Symphony Orchestra in Sibelius's Symphonies Nos 1-7, other orchestral works & Violin Concerto, with Gidon Kremer. Nov 26, 29, Dec 6, 10, 13, 7.30pm.

BBC Symphony Orchestra. Andrew Davis conducts Nielsen, Lindberg, Sandström, Stenhammar,

Nov 27; concert performance of Nielsen's first of only two operas, *Saul & David*, Dec 7, 7.30pm.

FESTIVAL HALL.

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-928 8800).

Philharmonia Orchestra. Semyon Bychkov conducts Strauss's *Don Juan*, Ravel's Piano Concerto for the left hand, with Andrei Gavrilov, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Nov 12; Stravinsky's Suite No 2 for small orchestra, Berio's Concerto for two pianos, with Katia & Marielle Labèque, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 6 (Pathétique), Nov 14; 7.30pm.

London Philharmonic. Adam Fischer conducts Kodály's *Peacock Variations*, Liszt's Piano Concerto No 2, with Dezso Ranki, Dvořák's Symphony No 7. Nov 13 & 20, 7.30pm.

Vienna Boys' Choir. Sacred &

secular works by Schubert, Strauss,

Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms &

Morley, directed by Vincent Borrits. Nov 15, 7.30pm.

Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Neville Marriner conducts Haydn's Symphony No 96, Mahler's Ruckert Lieder, with Mitsuko Shirai, mezzo-soprano, & Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2. Nov 18, 7.30pm.

Shura Cherkassky, piano, plays Bach/Tausig, Schubert, Chopin, Berio, Balakirev. Nov 22, 3.45pm.

The Royal Concert. Libor Pešek conducts the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Dvořák's Violin Concerto, with Ida Haendel, & *Slavonic Dances* Nos 12 & 9, Schubert's Symphony No 8 (Unfinished); Gillian Weir, organ, plays Liszt's Prelude & Fugue on BACH. Nov 25, 7.30pm.

Remembrance & Thanksgiving. David Willcocks conducts the Bach Choir & City of London Sinfonia in sacred works by Duruflé, Messiaen, Poulenc, Howells. Nov 26, 7.30pm.

London Philharmonic. Mariss Jansons conducts Mozart's Piano Concerto No 24, with Stephen Kovacevich, Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*. Nov 28, 7.30pm.

Vienna Philharmonic. James Levine conducts Brahms's Symphony

No 3, Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra & Debussy's symphonic sketches *La mer*. Dec 2, 7.30pm.

London Philharmonic. Bernard Haitink conducts Bartók's Violin Concerto, with Viktoria Mullova, & Concerto for Orchestra. Dec 3, 7.30pm.

Philharmonia Orchestra. Claus Peter Flor conducts Janáček's *Taras Bulba*, Dvořák's Violin Concerto, with Frank Peter Zimmermann, & Symphony No 9 (New World), Dec 4; Haydn's Sinfonia Concertante, Beethoven's Symphony No 9 (Choral), with the Philharmonia Chorus, Dec 9; 7.30pm.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Paul Daniel conducts Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Nørgård's Concerto for multi-percussion, with Evelyn Glennie, Stravinsky's *Petrushka*. Dec 6, 7.30pm.

London Philharmonic. Bernard Haitink conducts Mozart's Symphony No 39, Mahler's Symphony No 1. Dec 7 & 8, 7.30pm.

PURCELL ROOM

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-928 8800).

Cynthia Clarey, mezzo-soprano, **Iain Burnside**, piano. Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben*, & spirituals. Nov 18, 7.30pm.

YCAT Presentation Concerts: Anya Alexeyev, piano. Haydn, Schubert, Scriabin, Messiaen, Schumann. Nov 20, 8pm.

Onida Ensemble, Jill Gomez, soprano. Honegger & Milhaud centenary tribute, plus works by Roussel, Debussy & Ravel. Dec 5, 8pm.

Janice Watson, soprano, **Iain Burnside**, piano. Songs by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov & Liszt. Dec 16, 7.30pm.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-928 8800).

Peter Katin, piano. Mozart, Chopin, Debussy, Liszt. Nov 15, 3pm.

Henry Purcell the English Genius. A weekend of concerts given by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, conducted by Gustav Leonhardt, & the Purcell Quartet to



Janice Watson at the Purcell Room. James Levine conducts the Vienna Philharmonic. Barbara Bonney at Wigmore Hall.

launch a four-year celebration of the forthcoming Purcell tercentenary. Programmes include choral & instrumental works. Nov 20-22.

New London Consort. Philip Pickett directs Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. Nov 25, 7.45pm.

London Sinfonietta Diego Masson conducts works by Bainbridge, Lloyd, Matthews, Boulez, Turnage, Xenakis, Dec 1; Lothar Zagrosek conducts Lutoslawski, Ferneyhough, Abrahamsen, Birtwistle, Dec 8; 7.45pm.

Les Arts Florissants. William Christie conducts vocal works by Monteverdi. Dec 3, 7.45pm.

Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Laszlo Heltay conducts Bach, Barber, Kodály. Dec 9, 7.45pm.

Robert Levin, fortepiano. Schubert's *Sonata D850*, Beethoven's *Sonata Op 106 (Hammerklavier)*. Dec 10, 7.45pm.

Hanover Band. Roy Goodman directs Haydn & Mozart. Dec 15, 7.45pm.

WIGMORE HALL

Wigmore St. W1 (071-9352141).

Gala reopening. Margaret Price, soprano, & Philip Langridge, tenor, with Graham Johnson & Geoffrey Parsons, pianos, head a roster of distinguished singers in "A Celebration of Shakespeare", Nov 12, 7.30pm.

Margaret Price, soprano, **Graham Johnson**, piano. Lieder & songs by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Bridge, Britten. Nov 13, 7.30pm.

Beaux Arts Trio. Beethoven, Rorem, Brahms. Nov 14, 7.30pm.

Barbara Bonney, soprano, **Geoffrey Parsons**, piano. Songs by Grieg, Delius, Stenhammar, Sibelius Nov 15, 4pm.

Håkan Hagegård, baritone, **Thomas Schuback**, piano. Grieg, Brahms, Stenhammar, Ives, Martin, Schubert, Wolf. Nov 17, 7.30pm.

Les Arts Florissants. William Christie directs *Airs de cour, Airs sérieux et à boire*, by Charpentier, Couperin, Lambert, Lully. Nov 18, 7.30pm.

Karita Mattila, soprano, **Ilmo Ranta**, piano. Songs by Puccini,

Mahler, Strauss, Debussy, Sibelius. Nov 20, 7.30pm.

Dmitri Alexeев, piano. Schumann, Scriabin, Chopin. Nov 23, 7.30pm.

Solveig Kringselborn, soprano, **Kjell Baekkelund**, piano. Ibsen settings by Grieg, Delius, Wolf, Soderman, Egk. Nov 24, 7.30pm.

Pavel Nersessian. Winner of the Dublin 1991 International Piano Competition. Haydn, Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky. Nov 26, 7.30pm.

Cecilia Bartoli, mezzo-soprano, **György Fischer**, piano. Homage to Rossini. Three Italian songs, arias & songs to French, Latin & Spanish texts. Nov 29, 4pm.

Per Vollestad, baritone, **Sigmund Hjelset**, piano. Grieg, Schumann, Schubert, Rangström. Dec 1, 7.30pm.

Thomas Allen, baritone, **Roger Vignoles**, piano. Beethoven, Wolf, Nystroem, Peterson-Berger, Alnaes, Sinding, Grieg. Dec 8, 7.30pm.

Beatrice Harrison Centenary Concert. Tribute to the leading cellist of her day played by Julian Lloyd Webber, cello, John Lenehan, piano. Britten, Ireland, Delius, Dvořák, Rimsky-Korsakov. Dec 9, 7.30pm.

Anne Sofie von Otter, mezzo-soprano, **Bengt Forsberg**, piano. Lieder by Wolf & Britten, Swedish songs. Dec 12, 7.30pm.

CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Festive Music by Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, Handel & others, played by the London Concert Orchestra, London Choral Society plus carols for choir & audience. Dec 5, 3pm & 7.30pm. *Albert Hall, SW1 (071-8239998).*

Bach's Christmas Oratorio, parts 1-4 & 6, by Collegium Musicum of London. Dec 5, 7pm. *St John's Smith Sq, SW1 (071-2221061).*

Massed Hospital Choirs' Carol Concert, under Charles Farncombe, with Fanfare Trumpeters of the Royal Corps of Signals. Dec 5, 3pm & 7.30pm. *Festival Hall*.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. King's College Boys' Choir, Cambridge University Musical Society. Verdi's *Te Deum*, Rutter, Hazell &

carols. Dec 10, 7.30pm. *Festival Hall*.

Messiah. City of London Sinfonia. Dec 11, 7.30pm. *Barbican Hall*.

Concerts by Candlelight. Extracts from *Messiah*, *Four Seasons*, carols by Joyful Company of Singers & Orchestra of St John's Smith Sq. Dec 13, 3.30pm & 7.30pm. *St John's Smith Sq*.

London Concert Orchestra & choirs in Bach, Adam, Handel, Gounod, Bizet, Franck, Schubert, & carols. Dec 13, 7.30pm. *Festival Hall*.

Messiah. Jane Glover conducts Huddersfield Choral Society & Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Dec 14, 7.30pm. *Barbican Hall*.

Messiah. Franz Welser-Möst conducts the London Philharmonic & Choir. Dec 14 & 15, 7pm. *Festival Hall*.

London Symphony Orchestra play favourite works & carols. Dec 16 & 17, 7.15pm. *Barbican Hall*.

Messiah. John Lubbock conducts the London Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra of St John's. Dec 16 & 17, 7.30pm. *St John's Smith Sq*.

Choir of New College Oxford. Motets by Guerrero, Josquin, Palestrina, Poulenc, traditional carols. Dec 18, 7.30pm. *St John's Smith Sq*.

Hilliard Ensemble. Medieval Christmas music from Bohemia, Slovakia, Poland & Old Hungarian Empire. Dec 19, 7.30pm. *St John's Smith Sq*.

Royal Choral Society, Fanfare Trumpeters of Royal Marines. Family Festival of Carols, Dec 19, 2.30pm; Charity Gala in aid of cancer research, Dec 19, 7.30pm. *Albert Hall*.

Jordan Junior Strings. Vivaldi, Bach, Elgar, Corelli, carols. Dec 20, 3.15pm. *Purcell Room*.

Thomas Tallis Choir, Southend Boys' Choir. Bach, Mozart, Handel, Berlioz, carols for choir & audience. Dec 20, 3pm. *Barbican Hall*.

The Sixteen. Lassus, Mouton, Sheppard, Tallis, carols. Dec 20, 7.30pm. *St John's Smith Sq*.

Bach Choir Family Carols, with fanfare trumpets, brass & organ, conducted by David Willcocks. Dec 20, 11am & 2.30pm. *Albert Hall*.

Surveying the diamond cut thinness and satisfying plumpness of the words that had flowed from the dancing golden nib of his green and black Pelikan pen, Charles Dickens toyed with the droll thought of renaming his hero David Copperplate, then bent again to his task. How much better this was than working in a blacking factory!



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Mammoth-ivory carving from the Natural History Museum's First Europeans. Edvard Munch at the National Gallery. Eric Gill's sculptures at the Barbican.

EXHIBITIONS

Within London's Scandinavian Festival, the Barbican Art Gallery presents works by 14 northern artists while the National Gallery assembles a selection of Edvard Munch's work. The British Museum sheds light on the life of Howard Carter, who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun. Other events include a Sickert show at the Royal Academy & the Barbican's Gill retrospective.

AGNEW'S
43 Old Bond St, W1 (071-629 6176).

Barbizon & l'Ecole de la Nature. Paintings & pastels by Rousseau, Corot, Millet & other artists who worked near Fontainbleau in the 19th century. Nov 18-Dec 18. Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm, Thurs until 6.30pm.

ASPREY
165-169 New Bond St, W1 (071-493 6767).

Meissen Through Three Centuries. Includes many pieces from the Meissen museum in Saxony & a chance to see one of the factory's staff decorating porcelain. Nov 26-Dec 24. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm.

AUSTIN-DESMOND & PHIPPS
68/69 Great Russell St, WC1 (071-242 4443).

Wendy Taylor. Retrospective for a contemporary sculptor whose works decorate many public spaces. Nov 23-27. Daily 10am-5.30pm.

BARBICAN ART GALLERY
Barbican Centre, EC2 (071-638 4141).

Border Crossings. The work of 14 of Scandinavia's most exciting artists from the late 19th century to the present. Nov 11-Feb 7, 1993.

Eric Gill. First retrospective of this English artist-craftsman's sculptures, including religious works & intimate nudes. Nov 11-Feb 7, 1993. Mon-Sat 10am-6.45pm, Tues until 5.45pm, Sun noon-6.45pm. £4.50 (admits to both), concessions (& everybody Thurs from 5pm) £2.50.

CHRIS BEETLES
8/10 Ryder St, SW1 (071-839 7551).

The Illustrators: The British Art of Illustration 1800-1992. More than 870 works include an Arthur Rackham watercolour at £27,500 & E. H. Shepard sketches for £90. Nov 28, 29, Dec 1-14. Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm.

BRITISH MUSEUM
Great Russell St, WC1 (071-636 1555).

Howard Carter: Before Tutankhamun. The colourful life & career of the Egyptologist who discovered in 1922 the fabulous treasures of the pharaoh's tomb. Nov 19-May 31, 1993. £3, concessions £2.

Ukiyo-e Paintings. Screens, scrolls & albums from the Edo period. Part 1, until Nov 29; Part 2, Dec 1-Jan 31, 1993.

Britain's First View of China. The findings of Earl Macartney's expedition to the Peking Court between 1792 & 1794. Until Apr 4, 1993.

The Joseph E. Hotung Gallery of Oriental Antiquities. Newly opened showplace for the museum's bronzes, jades, paintings, decorative arts, ceramics, Buddhist sculptures & Indian religious sculpture traces the history of China, south & south-east Asia from prehistoric times to the present.

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm.

BURLINGTON PAINTINGS

Burlington Gardens, W1 (071-734 9984).

Philip Gardner, 1922-86. Watercolours of landscapes & London scenes. Nov 25-30. Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm, Sat 10am-5pm.

CORK STREET GALLERIES

Cork St, W1 (information 071-381 1324).

Open Weekend. Contemporary art on show in 17 galleries. Nov 28, 29. Sat 10am-7pm, Sun 11am-6pm.

DESIGN MUSEUM

Butlers Wharf, SE1 (071-407 6261).

Scandinavian Design. Three complementary exhibitions include a view of Scandinavian design in Britain from 1930 to 1970, & the new directions being taken by today's designers. Nov 12-Feb 28, 1993. Tues-

Sun 10.30am-5.30pm. £3.50, concessions £2.50.

HAYWARD GALLERY

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-261 0127).

Bridget Riley: According to Sensation. Colourful abstract paintings from the 1980s: a second Hayward retrospective for one of Britain's foremost artists. Until Dec 6.

The Art of Ancient Mexico. Major exhibition of Pre-Columbian sculpture & pottery. Until Dec 6. Daily 10am-6pm, Tues, Wed until 8pm. £5 (admits to both), concessions (& everybody on Mon) £3.50 (advance booking on 071-928 8800, £5.50 & £4).

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
Nash House, The Mall, SW1 (071-930 3647).

Marcel Broodthaers. Prints & multiples by this Belgian minimalist artist, poet, writer & film-maker. Until Dec 6. Daily noon-7.30pm, Tues until 9pm. Non-members £1.50.

MUSEUM OF LONDON
London Wall, EC2 (071-600 3699).

The Purple, White & Green. A re-evaluation of suffragettes in London from 1906 to 1914. Shrewd image-builders, they used logos & colours to put their message across & raise money to further the cause. Until June, 1993. Tues-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun noon-6pm. £3, concessions £1.50 (free daily after 4.30pm).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-928 3535).

Irn-Bru Pop Video Exhibition. The phenomenon of "three-minute culture" as seen in music, films & videos. Until Jan, 1993. Daily 10am-6pm. £5.50, students £4.70, children £4 (advance booking on 071-240 7200, £6, £5.20 & £4.50).

NATIONAL GALLERY

Trafalgar Sq, WC2 (071-839 3321).

Sainsbury Wing:

Edvard Munch: The Frieze of Life. Paintings, drawings & prints exploring the universal themes of Love, Anxiety & Death make up the Norwegian painter's view of real life in the 1890s. Nov 12-Feb 7, 1993. £4, concessions £2 (advance booking on 071-240 7200, £6, £4.20 & £4.20).

concessions £2 (advance booking on 071-497 9977, £5 & £2.50).

Sunley Room:

Themes & Variations: St Jerome.

Twenty paintings of the 4th-century scholar & polemicist. Until Dec 13. Daily 10am-6pm.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CARTOON ART
2 Carriage Row, 163-203 Eversholt St, NW1 (information 071-731 1372).

The Allan Cuthbertson Collection. The first exhibition by the Cartoon Art Trust shows examples of the genre from Cruikshank & Rowlandson to Heath Robinson & Steadman. Until Dec 23. Tues 2-6pm, Wed noon-4pm, Thurs 2-7pm.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY
St Martin's Pl, WC2 (071-306 0055).

Allan Ramsay, 1713-84. Comprehensive exhibition of a portraitist who painted the rich & beautiful of 18th-century Edinburgh & London & was court painter to King George III. Until Jan 17, 1993. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. £3, concessions £2.

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM
Cromwell Rd, SW7 (071-938 9123).

First Europeans. An up-to-date view of one of science's most hotly debated issues, using recent finds from Spain of fossilised fragments spanning 700,000 years. Until end Jan, 1993. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-6pm. £4, concessions £2.30, children £2 (free Mon-Fri after 4.30pm).

ROYAL ACADEMY
Piccadilly, W1 (071-439 7438).

Sickert (1860-1942): Paintings. Major exhibition of 135 works to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the artist's death. His subject-matter varied from portraits & quiet street scenes to music-halls & murders. Nov 20-Feb 14, 1993. £5, concessions £3.40, children £2.25 (advance booking on 071-240 7200, £6, £4.20 & £4.20).

Wisdom & Compassion: the Sacred Art of Tibet. The culture, history & religion of Tibet from the ninth century to the present. Until Dec 13. £5, £3.40, £2.25 (advance booking on 071-240 7200, £6, £4.20 & £4.20).



South Africa's rugby team tackle England. Constable's *Harnham Bridge looking towards Salisbury Cathedral*, part of Sotheby's British Paintings sale.

booking on 071-240 7200, £6, £4.20 & £4.20).

Tom Phillips: Major works 1970-92. Includes political metaphors of the 1970s, a series of painted poems about the artist's obsessions & illustrations of his interest in postcard imagery. Until Dec 20, £2.50, £1.70, £1.25. Daily 10am-6pm.

SERPENTINE GALLERY

Kensington Gardens, W2 (071-402 6075).

Patrick Caulfield: Paintings 1963-92. Thirty years of work by one of Britain's most successful pop-artists. Nov 24-Jan 17. Daily 10am-6pm.

TATE GALLERY

Millbank, SW1 (071-821 1313).

The Swagga Portrait. An impressive show of some 60 full-length paintings from Van Dyck to Augustus John. Until Jan 10, 1993. £4, concessions £1.50.

The Painted Nude: From Etty to Auerbach. Pictures spanning 150 years. Until Dec 7.

Weight & Measure 1992. Enormous new work by American sculptor Richard Serra. Until Jan 15, 1993.

Turner Prize Shortlist. The four finalists in this year's competition for contemporary artists (the winner is chosen on Nov 24). Until Nov 29. Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2-5.50pm.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Cromwell Rd, SW7 (071-938 8349).

Sporting Glory. Major exhibition of trophies from every national sport over 500 years, including The Ashes, football's World Cup & the Wimbledon Plate. Nov 11-Feb 14, 1993. £4.95, concessions £3.50 (includes admission to museum).

Samsung Gallery of Korean Art. A new permanent gallery to house Korean art from the fifth to the 20th centuries. Opens Dec 2.

Christmas Revels. Prints & drawings of Christmas pleasures: pantomime, food & fancy dress. Nov 18-Jan 12, 1993.

Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2.30-5.50pm. Voluntary donation, suggested £3, concessions 50p.

SPORT

For the first time since 1969 a South African rugby XV meets England at Twickenham. The horse-racing fraternity is eagerly waiting to see whether the Government will decide to allow on-course betting after the second experimental Sunday race meeting, held at Cheltenham. Lombard RAC rally drivers rip round Britain, & show-jumpers cut the corners at Olympia.

EQUESTRIANISM

Olympia International Show-jumping Championships. Dec 16-20. *Olympia, W14*.

FOOTBALL

England v Turkey. Nov 18. *Wembley Stadium, Middx.*

HORSE RACING

Mackeson Gold Cup. Nov 14. *Cheltenham, Glos.*

Cheltenham Sunday meeting. Nov 15. *Cheltenham.*

ICE SKATING

British Ice Dance Championships. Nov 13, 14. *Humberside Ice Arena, Hull.*

MOTOR SPORT

Lombard RAC Rally. Nov 22-26. Starts & finishes *Chester, Cheshire.*

NETBALL

England v New Zealand: second test, Nov 12. *G-Mex Centre, Manchester.* **third test,** Nov 14. *Granby Halls, Leicester.*

RUGBY

England v South Africa. Nov 14. *Twickenham, Middx.*

Wales v Australia. Nov 21. *Cardiff.* **Barbarians v Australia.** Nov 28. *Twickenham.*

Varsity Match (Oxford v Cambridge). Dec 8. *Twickenham.*

SNOOKER

UK Championship. Nov 13-29. *Guildhall, Preston, Lancs.*

SWIMMING

Optrex National Winter Championships. Dec 10-13. *Sheffield.*

OTHER EVENTS

The Lord Mayor's Show makes a colourful start to winter.

Christmas preparations fill the calendar, with carols, a crafts fair & the lighting of the Trafalgar Square tree.

Around the country mass tree-plantings commemorate 40 years of the Queen's reign.

Chinese State Circus. Breathtaking displays of agility & daring from jugglers, acrobats, wire-walkers & lion-dancers. Until Nov 19. Tues-Fri 7.30pm, Sat, Sun 2.30pm, 5pm & 7.30pm. *Clapham Common, SW4* (booking 0260 271145). From £8, concessions from £6.

Christmas Craft Fair. More than 300 of Britain's top craftspeople sell jewellery, toys, games & fashion items, & demonstrate their skills. Nov 28, 29. Sat 10.30am-5.30pm, Sun 10am-5.30pm. *Alexandra Palace, N22.* £4, concessions £3, children £2.

Christmas Programme. Carols, music & street shows cheer Christmas shoppers. Dec 1-23. *Carnaby St, W1* (information 071-2870907).

Christmas Tree. The lights are lit on the enormous spruce, an annual gift to Britain from the people of Oslo. Carols are sung daily 4-10pm until Twelfth Night. Dec 3, 3pm. *Trafalgar Sq, WC2.*

The English Country Garden. Lecture by gardening writer Rosemary Verey. Nov 24, 6.45pm. *English-Speaking Union, 37 Charles St, W1* (071-493 3328). £7.50.

Kensington Brocante Fair. Three floors crammed with dealers selling textiles, furniture & interior-design accessories. Nov 21, 11am-6pm. *Kensington Town Hall, Hornton St, W8.* £2.50, £1.50 after 2pm.

Lord Mayor's Show. The City's most colourful spectacle. A procession of floats accompanies the new Lord Mayor, Sir Francis McWilliams, to & from his lunch at the Law Courts in the Strand, EC4. Nov 14. *Dep Guild-*

hall, EC2, 10.45am; return to Mansion House, EC4, 2.15pm.

National Cat Club Show. Hundreds of fantastic felines, from pedigrees to household pets. Dec 12, 10.30am-5.30pm. *Olympia, W14.* £3.50, children £1.

National Tree Week. Nationwide scheme to persuade people to plant clusters of 40 trees in commemoration of this year's anniversary of the Queen's accession. Nov 26-Dec 6. Various venues (information & leaflet from the Tree Council, 071-235 8854).

Platform Performances: Tour de Farce, Brian Rix talks about his book on touring theatres & strolling players, Dec 8. *Cottesloe; Spitting Image,* The creative process of bringing the puppet characters in the National's current *Dragon* production to life, Dec 10. *Olivier; Dialogue,* Kenneth MacMillan & Nicholas Hytner discuss the new production of *Carousel*, Dec 11. *Olivier;* 6pm. *National Theatre, South Bank, SE1* (071-928 2252). £3.50, concessions £2.50.

Sales: Fine English Watercolours including a pastel portrait of the Duchess of Marlborough by Gainsborough, estimated at £50,000-£60,000, Nov 18, 11am, *Bonhams, Montpelier St, SW7* (071-584 9161).

British Paintings 1500-1850 includes Constable's *Harnham Bridge looking towards Salisbury Cathedral*, estimate £1 million, Nov 18, 11am, *Sotheby's, 34/35 New Bond St, W1* (071-493 8080). **Impressionist & Modern Pictures,** including seven paintings by Cézanne estimated in total at £12 million, Nov 30, 7pm, *Christie's, 8 King St, SW1* (071-839 9060).

Tender is the North. Comprehensive festival of Scandinavian culture. Concerts, exhibitions, film screenings & assorted entertainments, culminating in a candle-crowned ladies' choir performing in the Barbican foyer before & after the LSO's Sibelius concert on Dec 13 in celebration of the Swedish feast of Santa Lucia. Nov 10-Dec 13. *Barbican, EC2 & other venues* (information 071-638 4141).

CHRISTMAS QUIZ



ANSWERS

A

1 In 1985 she became the first British surrogate mother.
 2 He stormed off the set during a live television interview with Robin Day in 1982.
 3 A captain in the Life Guards, he was sentenced in 1987 to five years' imprisonment in Sweden after 110lb of cannabis was found in a car he was driving, belonging to his brother.
 4 She was the first woman to take part in the Boat Race when, in 1981, she acted as cox of the winning Oxford boat.
 5 He was the author and illustrator of the treasure-hunt puzzle-book *Masquerade*, published in 1979, which gave clues to the whereabouts of a jewelled golden hare.

6 A member of the far-left London Labour Briefing group, she became notorious as the leader of Lambeth Council in 1986-87. She predicted that Thatcherism would lead to gas chambers for lesbians, gay men, blacks and socialists.

7 While Tory MP for Ynys Mon, Anglesey, he was found guilty of attempted deception in 1987 and sentenced to four months in jail; he had applied for British Telecom shares on six forms, using four addresses and three names.

8 In 1983 he was mistakenly shot and seriously wounded by Scotland Yard marksmen who had mistaken him for a wanted man, David Martin.

B
 1b); 2a); 3b); 4a); 5c); 6a); 7c); 8c)

C
 1 "The Floral Dance"

2 Al Jolson

3 John Cage

4 A Parisian street song of the 16th century

5 André Previn was conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra

6 In jazz, the succession of different chords, repeated through the piece, upon whose harmonies improvisation takes place

7 *The Music Man*

8 It is a make of piano

9 Dave Brubeck's piece has five beats to the bar

10 *Stormy Weather*

D

1 a Harvey Wallbanger cocktail
 2 moussaka
 3 mulligatawny
 4 Cumberland sauce
 5 pesto
 6 zabaglione

E

1 wren; 2 chaffinch; 3 starling; 4 pied wagtail; 5 blue tit; 6 green woodpecker; 7 yellowhammer; 8 skylark; 9 herons; 10 curlews; 11 sheldrakes; 12 teal; 13 snipe; 14 woodcock; 15 nightingales; 16 goldfinches

F
 1 *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, "The Greek Interpreter", by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 2 *Lost Empires*, by J. B. Priestley
 3 *Middlemarch*, by George Eliot
 4 *A Brief History of Time*, by Stephen W. Hawking
 5 *Northanger Abbey*, by Jane Austen
 6 *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, by James Joyce
 7 *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, by Dylan Thomas

G

David Mellor, Norman Lamont, Boris Yeltsin, Nigel Mansell, Mike Tyson, the Prince of Wales, George Bush, Luciano Pavarotti, Ross Perot, the Duchess of York, Andre Agassi, Linford Christie, Mushtaq Ahmed, Paul Gascoigne.

H

1 October 21, anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar, 1805
 2 May 29, anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles II, 1660
 3 November 2, Roman Catholic festival on which prayers are offered on behalf of souls in purgatory
 4 February 2, the Purification of the Virgin
 5 April 23, widely supposed to be the date of William Shakespeare's birth in 1564
 6 September 29, the Feast of St Michael and All Angels and a Quarter Day
 7 October 25, anniversary of the saint's martyrdom in cAD286
 8 January 25, anniversary of Robert Burns's birth in 1759

I

Doré, Toulouse-Lautrec, Goya, Steinlen, Renoir.

J

1 carrageen, *Chondrus crispus*
 2 sea-belt, *Laminaria saccharina*
 3 tangle-weed *Laminaria digitata*
 4 sea oak, *Halidrys siliquosa*
 5 bootlace weed, *Chorda filum*
 6 bladder-wrack, *Fucus vesiculosus*

K

1 Agatha Christie
 2 Kingsley Amis
 3 Ruth Rendell
 4 Doris Lessing
 5 Julian Barnes

L

1 *Mary Barton* by Mrs Gaskell
 2 *Utopia Ltd* by Gilbert and Sullivan
 3 *All for Love* by John Dryden
 4 *The Prelude* by Wordsworth
 5 *Dr Strangelove*, directed by Stanley Kubrick

M

1 *The Third Man*
 2 *Gone with the Wind*
 3 The Kineopticon, at 2 Piccadilly Mansions, at the junction of Piccadilly Circus and Shaftesbury Avenue
 4 *The Robe*
 5 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*
 6 *The Titfield Thunderbolt*
 7 Charlie Chaplin's tramp

N

1 Anne Boleyn: Oberon in *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933); Bujold in *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969)
 2 Al Capone: Muni in *Scarface* (1932); De Niro in *The Untouchables* (1987)
 3 Sydney Carton: Colman in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1935); Bogarde in the 1958 version
 4 Cleopatra: Leigh in *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1946); Loren in *Due Notti con Cleopatra* (1954)
 5 Fletcher Christian: Gable in *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935); Brando in the 1962 version
 6 The Count of Monte Cristo: Donat in the 1934 version; Chamberlain in the 1974 version
 7 Elizabeth I: Robson in *The Sea Hawk* (1940); Jackson in *Mary, Queen of Scots* (1971)
 8 Sigmund Freud: Clift in *Freud* (1962); Guinness in *Lovesick* (1983)
 9 Genghis Khan: Wayne in *The Conqueror* (1956); Sharif in *Genghis Khan* (1965)
 10 Hamlet: Olivier in the 1948 version; Gibson in the 1990 version
 11 Heathcliff: Dalton in *Wuthering Heights* (1971); Fiennes in the 1992 version

12 Sherlock Holmes: Cushing in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1959); Stephens in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970)
 13 Robin Hood: Connery in *Robin and Marian* (1976); Cleese in *Time Bandits* (1981)

14 Long John Silver: Beery in *Treasure Island* (1934); Welles in the 1972 version

O

1 *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*
 2 *La Cenerentola*

3 *La gazzaladra*
 4 *Guillaume Tell*
 5 *Il Turco in Italia*
 6 *Il barbiere di Siviglia*
 7 *Mosè in Egitto*
 8 *La donna del lago*
 9 *Le Comte Ory*
 10 *Semiramide*

P

1 1829; 2 1911; 3 1871; 4 1919; 5 1930; 6 1909; 7 1963; 8 1966; 9 1980; 10 1942; 11 1870

Q

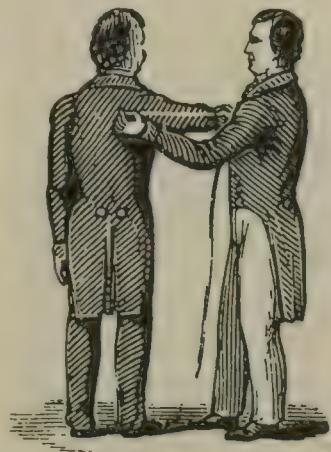
Left to right: Brompton Oratory; Lloyd's Building; junction of Gray's Inn Road and Pentonville Road; old Thomas Cook office, 125 Pall Mall; Apollo Theatre, St Pancras.

R

1 Bath, in Somerset
 2 Wookey Hole, in Somerset
 3 Grantchester, in Cambridgeshire
 4 Knutsford, in Cheshire
 5 Giggleswick, in Yorkshire

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(miniature)

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Queen Victoria in Mourning, painted in 1899 by Heinrich von Angeli, one of the many fine illustrations in *The Royal Collection*, a superb thematic introduction to the largest private art collection in the world, written by Christopher Lloyd, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, with foreword by the Prince of Wales, published by Sinclair-Stevenson at £25. Right, heads of 20-foot giant warriors at Tula, old capital city of the Toltec empire, from *Mexico*, by Kenneth McKenney, also handsomely illustrated, published by Flint River Press at £19.95.



BOOK CHOICE

Short notes on some suggested books for Christmas reading

HARDBACK NON-FICTION

Beaverbrook

by Anne Chisholm & Michael Davie
Hutchinson, £20

Lord Beaverbrook was a self-made man and money-maker who rode his luck and who, from the age of 30, was never short of a million or more. In England he used his money to buy political influence, which he exercised by his close relationship with Bonar Law and later through his newspapers, especially the *Daily Express*. Generous and mean, of huge vitality and recurring hypochondria, sometimes heroic, often monstrous and always promiscuous, he was in contact with virtually everyone of note between 1910 and 1964. His life was as full as he could make it, and his biographers have made the most of it.

The Selected Letters of Philip Larkin

edited by Anthony Thwaite
Faber, £20

These painful but exhilaratingly funny letters seem at first to reveal more of Larkin the man than Larkin the poet. Spending his life as a provincial librarian, he was quite evidently bored out of his mind: "As far as I'm concerned *absolutely nothing* has happened for about 12 years, and not much for 25", he wrote. But beneath the indefatigable irony of these letters is revealed the commitment that created the poet.

Bertrand Russell

by Caroline Moorehead
Sinclair-Stevenson, £20

The three passions that governed Bertrand Russell's life, he once wrote, were the search for knowledge, the longing for love, and unbearable pity for suffering. That life spanned nearly a century and he was, the author suggests, perhaps our last public sage, with what Virginia Woolf described as "a mind on springs". But he was also inconsistent and lacking in humanity, as this sympathetic but honest biography makes clear.

HARDBACK FICTION

Doctor Criminale

by Malcolm Bradbury
Secker & Warburg, £14.99

Set in the autumn of 1990, just after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Malcolm Bradbury's first novel in a decade follows the trail of an eastern European philosopher, Dr Bazlo Criminale, who is being sought by a punk pundit commissioned to do a television feature about him. The story provides the author with much opportunity for satire, but there is a serious history lesson beneath the froth.

Black Water

by Joyce Carol Oates
Macmillan, £12.99

The inspiration of this short but vivid novel is plain. A young woman, travelling in a rented car driven by an exuberant American senator, drowns when the car plunges off the road into deep, dark water off the coast of Maine. Joyce Carol Oates translates tragic fact into disturbing and unforgettable fiction as she describes the trapped woman's despairing wait for the rescue that does not come.

The Children of Men

by P. D. James
Faber, £14.99

The novel is set in the England of 2021, a decaying but apparently peaceful place where no child has been born for 25 years and where the old are ritually dispatched off the beach at Southwold. A sudden pregnancy upsets the tranquillity of this sterile life, and certainly changes the pace of the story, which is never less than gripping.

Time and Tide

by Edna O'Brien
Viking, £14.99

This is a powerful novel almost overloaded with emotion and the Irish lust for language. The theme is motherhood, which at times seems to have little chance against the heroine's fecklessness and her search for romantic love but in the end it swamps her and, probably, the reader too.

PAPERBACK NON-FICTION

Darwin

by Adrian Desmond & James Moore
Penguin, £9.99

Having set out his theory of evolution in secret notebooks at a time when England seemed to be upon the verge of revolution, Charles Darwin sat on it for 20 years, declaring, when he finally did reveal his ideas, that it was "like confessing to murder". This weighty book tackles the enigma of Darwin's life in the light of a wealth of new information—including his massive correspondence—with unwearying verve, explaining how an affable, retiring Shropshire gentleman transformed the thinking of the world.

A Life at the Centre

by Roy Jenkins
Pan, £9.99

Son of a Welsh miner, reforming Home Secretary, prudent Chancellor of the Exchequer, inspiration and founder member of the SDP, perceptive President of the European Commission; Roy Jenkins has had a political life worth writing about, and he does it full justice in this beautifully-written autobiography. Essential reading for anyone wishing to understand British politics in the second half of the 20th century.

Pity the Nation

by Robert Fisk
Oxford University Press, £7.99

Subtitled *Lebanon at War*, Robert Fisk's masterly account of the tortured history of Lebanon has been updated for this new edition. Much of it is first-hand reporting in its finest form, and it concludes with the freeing of the Western hostages. It is the end of a chapter, but not the end of the story of Lebanon.

London Statues and Monuments

by Margaret Baker
Shire Publications, £4.99

London has a great and growing population of silent statues, and this is a useful and enthusiastic introduction to some 300 of them.

PAPERBACK FICTION

A Landing in the Sun

by Michael Frayn
Penguin, £5.99

A civil servant investigates the mysterious death of a Whitehall colleague who fell from one of the Ministry's windows 15 years earlier. As the inquiry continues some intriguing facts emerge, not least that the dead man was assigned to a government project investigating the nature of happiness. A haunting novel, spiced with wit and a thread of melancholy.

Time's Arrow

by Martin Amis
Penguin, £5.99

An ambitious novel telling the story of a Nazi war criminal from death to birth, with this inverted technique sustained beyond irony to provide a totally original approach to the horrors of Auschwitz that will certainly prompt intense reader response.

Marking Time

by Elizabeth Jane Howard
Pan, £4.99

The second volume of the Cazalet Chronicles begins with the outbreak of war in 1939, the blacking out of the windows of Home Place and the decline into food shortages and other privations. It matches the evocative and descriptive power of *The Light Years*, and promises, when the final two volumes have been completed, to provide a potent chronicle of a time that seems long gone.

MAMista

by Len Deighton
Arrow, £4.99

The dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany removed the familiar setting of a Len Deighton novel. He has responded by transferring the action to South America, where many of the customary ingredients of revolutionary intrigue and violence are to be found. The steamy atmosphere of the place is finely conveyed, but the plot is less than usually compelling.

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